

PC ZONE

WORLD EXCLUSIVE!

Rincewind returns in
Perfect's new Pratchett adventure

DISCWORLD 2

FREE!
Flight Sim 95 Keyboard overlay

ARE YOU A
COMPUTER
GEEK?
FIND OUT INSIDE!

Privateer 2: The Darkening

The six million dollar game

Network Q RAC Rally

The best driving game ever?

Gene Wars

Bullfrog go to war
without weapons

Your CD is missing!
Ask your newsagent Now!

WORLD EXCLUSIVE! Microsoft FLIGHT SIM 95

TREMENDOUS!

NEW GAME OFFER

See page 142





Specialists to

MERIDIAN 59

"Not since the discovery of the Americas has there been so much excitement about a new world"

Steve Jackson, columnist, Daily Telegraph



"We've been here every weekend since our first visit last year"



"The only problem with Meridian is eventually you have to leave"



"After our night in Familiars bar we've been friends ever since"



"We first saw each other in the Temple at Marion, and now we're getting married there next month"

THE FORESTS OF MERIDIAN

Venture into the Castle of Victoria where, legend has it, you can encounter ghosts (some more friendly than others). Meet under the Spider tree or camp in the spectacular Berdonne Canyons. Visit Ketanaa the hermit, who can give you useful information about the forest if he's in the mood to talk. With over 300,000 acres of lush green vegetation the forests of Meridian have something for everyone.



Marion is the royal city of Meridian. It is said that Princess Xiana can bestow magical powers on those who find her favour.



BEWARE. Farol Forest is home to Orcs and spiders. Tread carefully.



THE OLD TOWN OF MARION

One of the oldest towns in Meridian 59 and without doubt one of the most exciting. At the centre of the town is the magnificent temple of Sha'li Ile, home to the Princess Xiana.

Visit the well near her temple, famed for its healing powers.

The town itself is a beautiful place and full of unusual creatures. It is also one of the best places in Meridian 59 to go shopping for weapons. Unfortunately for all its beauty, Marion is not a nice place to be after sundown and there is danger should you wander into the wrong parts of town.

THE TOWN OF TOS

Tos is the main town of Meridian 59 and home to the world famous bar 'Familiars'.

The bartender, Paddock, likes to chat to tourists and is a hot source of local gossip.

This picturesque little town also boasts a spell shop and a blacksmith. You'll find 'Frisconars Mysticals', and 'Ye Olde Blacksmith of Tos' just two doors down from Familiars.

They are both places not to be missed.

You'll find life in Tos far more relaxing than the neighbouring territories and, what's more, it's renowned as being the safest place on Meridian 59. If however you want a little more adventure then visit The Arena, on the East side. Here there are fights staged for your entertainment.

You can take part but, be warned, they are to the death.



Fabled for its ferocious predators, Kardde's Canyon is one of the most dangerous places in Meridian.



Paddock, Frisconar and Fehr'toi Qan await your arrival in the town of Tos.



KARDDE'S CANYON & KARDONNE

Situated to the west of the town of Tos lies Kardonne with a wide range of places to visit and things to do. Buy relics at Stonehenge or breakfast with the Moushi at the top of the beautiful Badlands Mountain.

Kardde's Canyon is primarily a short cut to the forest but has its own points of interest. With the help of a map you can explore the deep caves, but take your Orc repellent, they can give you a nasty bite. Once in the caves ensure you visit the underground lake.

visit Meridian 59

To book your trip to Meridian 59 contact studio 3DO tours on <http://www.3do.com> or visit your nearest 3DO dealer. Packages from £39.99.

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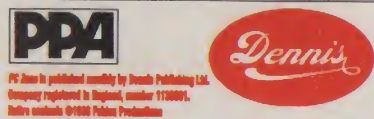
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PC games magazine: ABC 43,149



DISCWORLD 2

PC Zone in association with Perfect Entertainment, Terry Pratchett and Nigel Planer bring you the first ever review of *Discworld 2*. Is it even better than the first game? Turn to page 82 and find out.



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COVER DISKS

CD ZONE



Help!

The CD not working? HD playing up? The PC's being a total bast? Don't worry - phone our helpline and sort yourself out pronto!

HD DISK HELP

Phone Matthew on 01274 736990
Any week day between 9am and 4pm

CD-ROM HELP

Phone ABT on 01708 250250
Any week day between 11am and 6pm
(Please DO NOT phone the PC Zone office as your calls will NOT be answered)

If you are calling either help line, then please take note of the following points:

- If possible have your PC operating and near to the phone when you call.
- If this is not possible, note down as much relevant information as possible (ie system type, sound card, RAM etc, plus the nature of the fault).
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call to jot down the relevant info.

No CD?

If you are unable to get your grubby paws on the CD issue, then fear not! Simply fill out this slip, enclose your HD from the cover plus a cheque for a whole £1 and send it to:

CD Exchange (43), PC Zone, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover St, London W1P 7HJ

Your details (please print clearly)

Name:

Address:

Post code:

Please make cheques payable to:
DENNIS PUBLISHING Ltd.

CDs from previous issues are also available.

HD DISKS

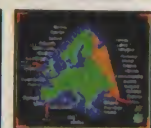


To run the software on this month's floppies, make your disk drive current by typing 'A:' and then type either 'Empire' or 'WADAuth', depending on what disk you wish to run.

World Empire IV (Shareware)

A Risc-like game that supports up to four players over a network. This is a 30-day trial and runs under Windows 95/3.1.

Min. Spec: 486 DX2/66 8MbRAM SoundBlaster & compatibles Windows 95/3.1



WAD Author for Doom, Doom2, Heretic & Hexen for Windows 95/3.1/NT

A complex WAD editor that allows you to create your own levels for all of the above iD games. Access the README.TXT file on the floppy for more information and instructions on how to use this powerful utility.

NOTE: To run this editor you'll need Windows 95/3.1 and you must have either Doom, Doom2, Hexen or Heretic already installed on your hard drive.



CD ROM

To access the software on this month's CD, change to your CD drive (i.e. type 'D:') and then type 'PCZONE'. This will automatically launch the menu system and then it's simply a question of pointing and clicking your way through the various options to install the demos onto your hard drive.

Discworld 2 (Perfect Entertainment/Psygnosis)

Lose yourself in this interactive tale set on Terry Pratchett's funky, far-out Discworld, the immense biscuit-shaped planet that's balanced on the back of a turtle and four elephants...or is it four turtles and one elephant? Or two elephants, a cow, and a bloody big snake? I'm not sure.

Anyhow, in this fully playable demo of Perfect Entertainment's jaw-dropping Discworld 2 you'll find yourself taking control of Rincewind, the wizardly hero (voiced by Eric Idle, erstwhile king of all things 'Zany'). Your aim, in this tantalising fun-size chunk of the action, is to somehow get yourself out of the city of Ankh-Morpork. Since the only people who are allowed out are the dead ones, this ain't going to be easy. Pull your brains out and wrap 'em round that one, smartarse. Some of the jokes are funny enough to set you pissing your knickers, so make sure you put a bucket down before you start. Once it's full to the brim, tape it up and send it to Gary Bushell, c/o The Sun 'newspaper', Wapping.

Controls: Discworld 2 uses a Windows 95-style control method. A single click with the left mouse button will make Rincewind walk to your desired location; double-click on an object to use it. If you want to talk to someone, just double-click on them. Clicking the right mouse button will cause Rincewind to utter a pithy comment about whatever he's looking at.



Rincewind can carry two objects at a time in his pockets; single-click on him to see what he's got. The walking luggage that follows you around, however, can carry more or less anything (click on that to see what's inside, or to add a new object). If you want to save your position, or tinker about with the set-up, just hit F1 during the game.

Min. Specs: DX2/66 8Mb RAM CD-ROM SVGA SoundBlaster & compatibles

PSSST...! HERE'S A HINT... If you accidentally ask someone the same question twice, rather than sit through their responses all over again, just hit the 'Escape' key to go back to the conversation menu.

Network Q RAC Rally Championship

Magnetic Fields/Europress Software)

Ever wondered what it's like to drive like a complete bloody maniac at 1000 miles an hour through a series of winding countryside courses, apparently constructed by someone with a PhD in Twisty Road Design? You haven't? Well, pull yourself together, man - it's Rally Driving time. Pull a pair of butch driving gloves over your pasty, sweaty, girl's hands, and haul your unpleasant, flabby arse into the driving seat for this wheel-tastic demo of the upcoming Europress 'driving without due care and attention' sim.

We think you'll agree that the smooth, speedy graphics, the authentic sound effects, and the convincing handling add up to something very special indeed. We wuv it woads.



Indeed, it's so realistic and atmospheric, the only thing lacking is an option to make your monitor screen explode in your face in a shower of glass whenever there's a nasty crash. Which is a feature that hopefully won't be making it into the final release - although loads of other, less dangerous, yet equally exciting ones will: more courses, cars and weather conditions.

Anyway, fire up the demo and you're away. There's only one course (and one car) but it's a huge one. Pay attention to the loud-mouthed navigator 'cos he knows which bends are coming up next. When the race starts, your gears are in neutral; make sure you change up as soon as those lights turn green. If you think it's a bit of a pushover, try changing the road width or the intelligence of the opposing drivers (from the main options screen).

Keyboard Controls:

Z Left
X Right
* Accelerate
I Change Gear Up
O Change Gear Down
/ Brake

We recommend the use of a gamepad... or better yet, one of those steering wheel things, just don't try using the mouse.

Min. Spec: 486DX266 8Mb RAM SoundBlaster 50Mb HDD space free

YOU GOTTA ROLL WITH IT: For added larfs, why not see how many times you can roll the car over... and still finish first. Swerving the wrong way at top speed on a sharp bend is a surefire way of sending the car over lit. Just don't try it in a real car, okay? Unless you've got Gary Bushell in the passenger seat, that is.

DO NOT TURN THE PAGE

UNTIL YOU HAVE SOLVED THIS RIDDLE

My first is in Castle but not in King
My second in Jewels but not in a Ring
My third is in Fear but not in Fright
My fourth is in Darkness but never in Night
My fifth is in Scotland, but far from Wales
My sixth is in Heads, but not in Tails
My seventh is in Ghost but isn't in Dead
My eight is a Nightmare but not in Bed
My ninth is Enigma but not in a Mystery
My tenth is an Ancestor but not one from History
My eleventh is You but you are not Involved
My all is a mystery yet to be solved.



TRILOBYTE

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Syndicate Wars (Bullfrog/Electronic Arts)

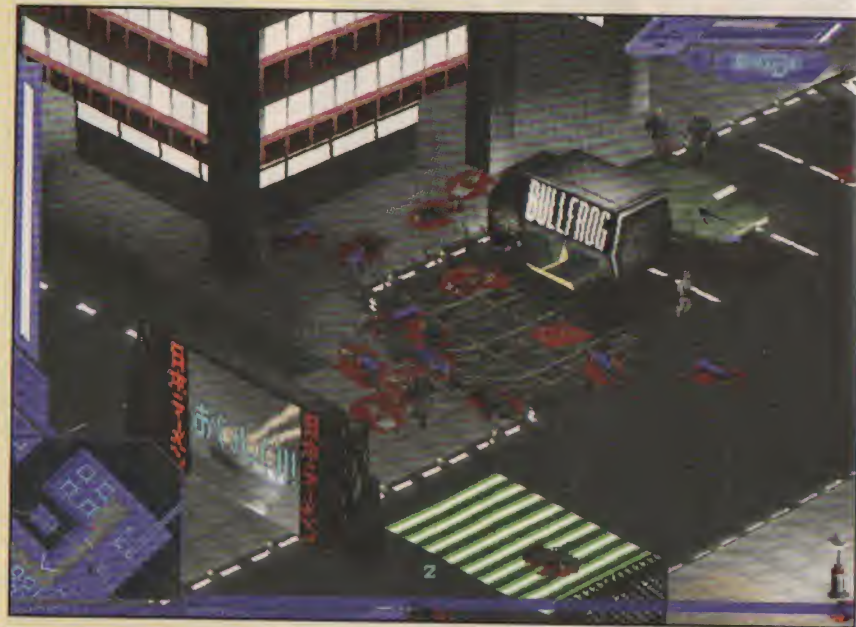
We drooled an oily bucketful of saliva over this in the last issue. Now here's your chance to climb inside that bucket. Immerse yourself completely in the seedy, violent world of *Syndicate Wars*, the game with a heart of black and cast of thousands of soon-to-be corpses. Watch the body count escalate to apocalyptic proportions in the comfort of your own home, as you take command of a team of homicidal cyborg henchmen rampaging through a sprawling, futuristic cityscape. There's one mission in this playable demo - be sure to read the briefing at the start, 'cos it's a bit tricky. If, during the game, you're not sure where you're going, check out the map in the bottom left corner of the screen - the red radar rings are emanating from your current target. Oh yeah - and if you double-click the ol' mouse, your agents will run to their destination.

Controls:
Note: You can control the game entirely with the mouse if you wish, although the following keyboard commands are pretty bloody handy:

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 1-4 | Select team member |
| \ | Group agents together |
| K | Toggle agent movement control from mouse to cursor keys |
| Del | Rotate city left |
| PgDn | Rotate city right |
| Ins | Tilt up |
| Pg Up | Tilt down |
| Ctrl | Fire selected weapon |

Mouse:
Left button move (double-click to run)
Right button fire
Click on a weapons icon to activate it, or to select another.

Min. Spec: 486 DX2/66 8Mb RAM SoundBlaster & compatibles



SPOD CORNER: To run *Syndicate Wars* in high-res mode (which we heartily recommend if you have a fast Pentium), you'll need a VESA-compatible video card, with the relevant drivers installed (*Univbe 5.1* is a particularly good shareware one, if you haven't already got it). The game defaults to low-res on start-up - change the configuration screens or hit F8 to switch from high to low.

Road Rash '95 (Electronic Arts)

Wahey! It's clobberin' time! And it's clobberin' time on motorbikes, at that. *Road Rash '95* is an utterly 'oooh la la' arcade game that's overflowing with thrills, spills, chills and sudden unexpected blows to the head.



You're taking part in a no-holds barred illegal road race across America. To win you'll have to drive very fast and punch your opponents very hard - both at the same time. If you're lucky, you'll manage to grab a weapon to help you smack the bastards. If you're unlucky, you'll find yourself colliding head-on with a car at 200mph. Mow down pedestrians, attack the police, drive like a melonfarmer. Who could ask for anything more? This cut-down demo version gives you one track - The Peninsula - but the full version features all the others (and it's miles harder).

- Controls:** (Hint - use a gamepad - it's better)
- | | | | |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|----------|
| Cursor key up | Accelerate | Cursor down | Brake |
| Cursor left/right | Steer | Spacebar | Backhand |
| a | Punch | z | Kick |
- (All the keys are re-definable)

Min. Spec: 486 DX2/66 8Mb RAM SoundBlaster & compatibles Windows 95

A QUICK 'HINT' TO HELP YOU PLAY... To really psych yourself up, imagine that all the other racers are clones of Gary Bushell. It's amazing how satisfying it feels when you bash their stupid, fat heads in.

Time Commando (Adeline/Electronic Arts)

In which you, for reasons which don't entirely warrant repetition, find yourself spiralling helplessly through time, hopping from era to era in an instant, constantly getting into scraps.

Yes, folks, it's a beat-'em-up; a three-dimensional platform game-cum-beat-'em-up in fact. Sceptical? Give it a quick go and you won't be. The graphics are gorgeous, the gameplay simple, but addictive. This one-level demo sends you back to the Jurassic period, where you'll face sabre-toothed tigers and hairy-palmed, Bushell-brained cavemen in a fight to the death. Keep moving to keep up with the camera position. And here's a tip - pick up any rocks you see lying around. They're ideal for hurling at people's heads...

Min. Spec: DX2/66 8Mb RAM SoundBlaster & compatibles

- Keyboard controls:**
- | | |
|--------------|---|
| UP | Move forward (if an enemy is near, Stanley will jump forward slightly). |
| DOWN | Move backward |
| RIGHT | Move clockwise |
| LEFT | Move counter-clockwise |
| CTRL + LEFT | Left-handed punch/weapon |
| CTRL + RIGHT | Right-handed punch /weapon |
| CTRL + UP | Kick /Weapon |
| CTRL + DOWN | Protection/Parry |
| SPACEBAR | Search/Look |



FRANCE IS PLOP: *Time Commando* is great. In fact, its sole drawback is that it was written in France - the smelly, horrible place where people who don't wash, shave, wipe their bottoms properly, or make entertaining films live. Stinkypooland, that's what we call it.

Scorched Planet Criterion/Virgin Interactive Entertainment

Coming at ya in all three dimensions from Criterion Software is *Scorched Planet*, the game that's sort of like a modern day take on *Commander*. If you think the 3D engine's pretty bloody smart, then you shouldn't be surprised - Criterion started out as a 3D software company and this represents its first foray into the PC gaming arena. Bodes well for the future, then wethinks.

The action's somewhat fast and furious, but you will need to know what you're doing before you get stuck in. It's a tad too complex to describe right here...which is why it's just as well Criterion saw fit to include a helpful manual, complete with pictures and everything, along with this demo. It'll install itself into the same directory as the game files - just open it with Microsoft Word (or the special viewing program that's also provided) and read away. Anyway, we're reprinting all the keyboard commands here as a handy reference guide...



- | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Mouse Control | Alt + up & down arrows | move aircraft from side to side |
| Right mouse button (RMB) | P | pause game |
| Left mouse button (LMB) | S | shadows on/off |
| Alt + Mouse movement | T | select homing missile target |
| Alt + Mouse movement | L | lock onto selected target |
| Mouse movement | M | toggle homing missile camera angles |
| Keyboard Control | X | sodomise Gary Bushell |
| Home | F1 | cockpit view |
| End | F2 | first-person view |
| Esc | F3 | top-down view |
| → | F4 | fixed camera orientation |
| ← | F5 | fixed chase view |
| Shift | F6 | fixed rear view |
| Ctrl | F7 | left side view |
| Arrows | F8 | right side view |
| Tab | F9 | free chase view |
| [] | | |
| Enter | | |
| Space bar | | |
| - + | | |
| Alt + up & down arrows | | |
-
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------|------------------------|-------------|--------------|---|------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------------|------------|---------|-------------------------|
| vehicle door open/close | calling humans onboard | vehicle morph | exit to Options screen | radar range | lower/higher | accelerate (double-click for higher tank speed) | fire | vehicle direction | map view on/off | cycle through inventory items | use selected inventory item | rotates vehicle | 180 degrees | brightness | down/up | tank turret up and down |
| white dot | yellow dot | blue dot | red dot | purple dot | red square | | | | | | | | | | | |
-
- | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------|--------------|-----------|
| human | power-up (flashing = fuel/shield) | flying Voraxian | ground Voraxian | Voraxian | Factory Ship | spacegate |
|-------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------|--------------|-----------|
-
- Specs:** 486DX66 min 8Mb RAM VGA SoundBlaster & compatibles Joystick recommended

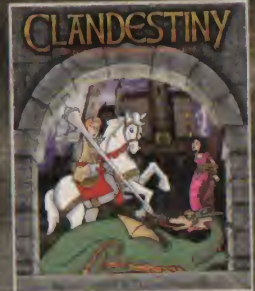


YOU CAN'T CHEAT

WHEN YOU PLAY

CLANDESTINY

A spooky Cartoon adventure from the creators of The 7th Guest™



Cool Quake Stuff!

Just when you thought it was safe... to think we would stop talking about *Quake**, here we are again with a bundle, nay a cornucopia, of new add-ons, maps, extras, and levels for the game that begins with 'Q'.

Explore your *PC Zone* CD this month and find a directory called 'QSTUFF'. Within, you will find several directories, each one packed to touching cloth point with new code constructed by the sad denizens of the Net. Most of this stuff was sourced from <http://www.stomped.com/> - the best *Quake* Web site around. There are a few things to note, however, before you canter off into the wonderpark.



1. Read the documentation for each path thoroughly before implementing.
2. The majority of these patches are in *quake c* format, either compiled (as a PROGS.DAT file), or uncompiled (as a list of .QC files).
3. If the zip file contains a PROGS.DAT file, simply create a new folder in your registered *QUAKE* directory. Say, for example, 'GIBS'. Copy the PROGS.DAT file into the GIBS directory and then run *QUAKE* with this command line:

`quake -game gibs`

That's it. Your add-on is now in action. It has not changed or altered your *Quake* files, so don't be scared.



4. If the add-on is uncompiled, then you will have to compile it yourself. This is annoying and requires you to use the QCCDOS or the QCCWIN32 programs included in the QSTUFF directory. These are *Quake C* compilers and will produce a PROGS.DAT file. If you don't feel up to it, don't do it. We will endeavour to put a bunch of pre-compiled patches on the disk next month.

5. The new levels are easy to sort out. Just enter the *QUAKEVID1* directory and create a folder called MAPS. Unzip the level files in there, run *QUAKE*, and at the console, type:

`MAP XXXXXX`

where XXXXX is the exact name of the MAP file.

If you get stuck, access the README.TXT file that accompanies each file.



BOTS

Bots are the latest fad in *Quake* add-ons. Basically, they're automated, artificially intelligent objects - either monsters, other players, or 'floaty things'. Depending on the patch, they will act as helpers (to aid you in single-player) or as teammates or opponents (in deathmatch). If you want to try a deathmatch bot out, start a multi-player game in *Quake*, selecting 'Direct Connection'. Some patches of merit are:

BGADMBOT stands for the BG Automatic DM Opponent. You can have up to four of these nasty little gits patrolling a level. They'll pick up weapons, ammo, health and armour. Choose different weapons, hunt you down, fight amongst themselves, and telefrag you if given the chance.

BGBOT is similar to the above, only these boys are tuned for teamplay deathmatch and will fight like slaves on your side, drawing enemy fire and sacrificing themselves to rockets in order to protect you.



CUJO is your own personal rottweiler which will follow you around the level, biting your opponents, both monsters and other players. He also has a patented CollarLamp™, useful in dark bits.

MYBOT is a helper droid in the shape of an enforcer which slowly trugs round the level at your heels, killing anything which fires at you, and searching for health when it feels poorly. It also can get angry.

WISP is shaped like a lavaball and flies around you, rather like the R-Type 'orb', firing and drawing the fire of monsters. If you find yourself in a tricky situation, you can also ride it to the rafters.



MULTI-PLAYER

There are some cool deathmatch add-ons out there, programmed primarily to 'correct' and enhance the spoogethworthy rush of *Quake* deathmatch.

CAMPKILL is an anti-lurker device which monitors 'camping' players for lack of movement. A stationary sniper is given three warnings and is then unceremoniously gibbed for being a talentless pig. This patch also contains a next level randomiser.

DMMDE321 adds a selection of monster-packed deathmatch modes, combining respawning monsters and infinite ammo for extra laughs.



JFIEND turns Pentagram Of Protection wearers into Fiends with all the nasty jumping ability and claws which come with the job. Hilarious.

ENHANCED TEAMPLAY makes chum-based firefights a joy. Here you can tailor your clan matches, so that players are killed or lose a frag for accidentally murdering teammates. Players can also drop weapons, and are prevented from swapping teams if loosing.

KEYMIX15 is far away one of the best *Quake C* add-ons. It will change your deathmatch life as it adds over 16 new weapons and effects, including Throwing Axe, Bubbles, Shotgun Shells, Proximity Mines, Drunk Missile, MultiSkin, Fish Rockets, and Nukem-style pipebombs.



MISCELLANEOUS

A few uncategorysable add-ons can be found here. Blood gives you, well, extra blood in the game while Decoy creates a self-destructing, remote-operated Holo Quake. Expbk is for exploding backpacks, and Grap105 adds the indispensable grappling hook.



WEAPONS

The weapons directory is full, as you may guess, of extra hardware for your hardy marine. Among them is the classic Axe Of Command (swipe a monster and he becomes your slave), Blaster (to gain the Enforcer's laser gun), Homing Missile, Tractor Beam, Nail Bomb, Vampire Bolt, MediaBolt, and Ricochet Nails. Nice.

QUAKE PATCH OF THE MONTH: This month's king of the *Quake C* add-ons has to be the Godel combo (GODELOC3.ZIP). It takes and combines over 20 of the best and throws them into one file for your enjoyment. It includes: Multiskin (creates new 'clothes' for your player), Extra Ammo, Temp Weapons, Missile Teleport (for shooting grenades and such like things), Variable Grenades, Observer (to just sit and watch a game), Variable HoloQuake, Electro Bot (amoral, Thunderbolt wielding bot), Solid Shooting, Living Range and Super shotguns, Recharging Lightning Gun, PushingHands (which drains the life from all it strikes), and PushingHands (which randomly throwing other players around the scenery).



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Upgrade your fighter pilot instincts to meet the demands of the next century with Tactcom - the new feature-packed upgrade disk for EF2000. New features include:

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Over one hundred additional new features push EF2000 into the next millennium and beyond. Tactcom is the future.

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TACTICAL COMMUNICATIONS

ORIGINAL DOS EF2000 REQUIRED

**Diablo** (Blizzard/Zabrac)

Diablo is an absurdly beautiful isometric role-playing game from Blizzard (the *Warcraft* people).

As befits a Windows 95 native product, it's all controlled with the mouse, in a manner so self-explanatory that only a total arsewit couldn't work it out for themselves. Anyway, in case Gary Bushell is reading, here's what you do. Use the left mouse button for walking around. Highlight a character with the mouse, then click to talk to them (or hack them to death, depending on your situation). If you're a bit confused, head up to the top right of the playing area and you'll discover the entrance to a dungeon. Nip inside that and it's argy-bargy time. You'll soon get the hang of things. The full version is all set to feature a rather nifty on-line multi-player mode, in which you find yourself a-questing alongside other players from all over the world (i.e. long-haired, Metallica-worshipping students from Delaware).

Controls: Use the mouse, turkeyneck.

Min. Specs: 486 DX266 min 8Mb RAM (Pentium recommended) SVGA Windows 95 SoundBlaster & compatibles. Modem & Internet account req. for multi-player mode



DIRECT BACON, DIRECT X: Like many of this month's offerings, *Diablo* requires the latest version of DirectX to run. Don't panic if you don't know what the hell that means – it's a new set of spangly display gizmos for Windows 95, and it's included on our CD. If you have any problems with your display following the installation of Direct X, simply restart Windows in 'safe mode' (by hitting F8 as soon as the 'Starting Windows 95...' message appears, then choosing the relevant option from the list), open the Control Panel, and change your display driver back to the original setting. We're not trying to scare you, we're just being practical. Okay?

Cyber Gladiators (Sierra)

Sierra has been a bit quiet of late, but *Cyber Gladiators* looks set to change all that. Taking its lead from *Tekken* and *Virtua Fighter*, it's a blindingly gorgeous-looking 3D beat-'em-up with more polygons than you'll see in a whole season of Open University programmes.

Aside from the compulsory selection of funky special moves, you'll also notice weapons being hurled into the arena; pick these up and do with them what you will. Lonely types can play against the computer, but those of you with friends can indulge in a little two-way action. There are only two available fighters in this demo version – as you'd expect, the final release will have skiploads more. Here's hoping it'll also feature a secret level in which you have to tie Gary Bushell to a chair and... (I really think that's enough! Just cos he's got a beard! – Ed).

Controls:

Action	Player 1	Player 2
Left	A	Cursor Left
Right	D	Cursor Right
Jump	W	Cursor Up
Crouch	S	Cursor Down
Quick Punch	K	5
Hard Punch	I	8
Quick Kick	L	6
Hard Kick	J	4
Start Game	Spacebar	Return

Min. Specs: 486DX2/66 8Mb RAM Windows 95 48Mb HDD space free SVGA (DirectX) SoundBlaster & compatibles



HELEN DANIELS WINS: Hardly relevant, this, but just for the record, I'd really like to see a 3D polygon beat-'em-up featuring the cast of *Neighbours*. I reckon Helen Daniels would look great as a texture-mapped warrior. And you could have old Des Clarke turning up at the end, as a kind of Satanic overlord. It'd be swell. Alternatively, how about a Gallagher brothers beat-'em-up? You could opt to play Liam or Noel, kick the shit out of each other and then spit at the rest of the band.

AOL BONUS CD

To install this month's AOL CD, go to Windows Explorer (or File Manager under Windows 3.x) and double click on the file Setup.exe. This will install the latest AOL software onto your PC. Once you've done this, go back to the CD and double click on the file Pptview.exe.

This will give you a very quick guide as to what *Terris* is all about and how to get on-line. Finally, before you log on (and to make getting to grips with the game easier), check out the Readme.txt file that's included on the CD. If you're still having trouble, ring the support line on: 0800 279 7444 for instant help.

INTERNET THINGIES

We've hurled a bundle of Internet utilities onto the CD because we're nice. Really. We want to come round to your house and stroke your hair. Assuming you've washed it during the last six months. Which you probably haven't, you useless bunch of stinking bastards, you.

ESSENTIALS

On the basis that you can't have too much of a good thing, we've also lobbed in some other freebies – compression utilities, Direct X, Paint Shop Pro, new Windows drivers... we spoil you, you know. We really do.



It's better
to give than
to receive



SYNDICATE WARS the stylishly violent sequel to *Syndicate* available on PC CD

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BULLETIN

Hot new LucasArts news

Two new announcements from big George's very own software division, plus new Jedi Knight shots to drool over.

ARE YOU READY FOR THIS? EXCITING NEWS has broken of LucasArts' latest addition to the Star Wars collection of games. *Rebellion* sees the Empire and Rebellion forces collide in what is already being described as 'the ultimate Star Wars strategy game' (well, they would say that - it also happens to be the only Star Wars strategy game at the moment). Unlike previous Star Wars games from LucasArts, *Rebellion* places the player in the role of strategic commander of all resources, planets and forces controlled by the Empire or Rebel Alliance. A character-based, single or head-to-head game, *Rebellion* sets out to immerse the player in a variety of strategic and tactical challenges. To succeed, players fighting for the Empire must capture Luke Skywalker, Mon Mothma or destroy the Rebel headquarters. Those following the Rebel cause can rule supreme by capturing Darth Vader, The Emperor or by overthrowing the Imperial Seat at Coruscant. Very little has been shown as yet but sources claim a C&C-style of gameplay. Imagine all the Star Wars universe kit you'll have at your disposal!

The second huuuuuge announcement this month is *The Curse of Monkey Island*, effectively part three in the tremendously popular Guybrush Threepwood series. This time we'll find Guybrush on a quest to save Elaine Marley, his one true love, from the clutches of arch enemy LeChuck. As the game begins, the evil and wily buccaneer LeChuck is attempting to woo Elaine into becoming his undead bride. But, hoping to marry Elaine himself, Guybrush

unknowingly slips onto her finger a cursed ring that turns her into a gold statue. He must find a way to remove the curse, all the while battling scurvy-ridden villains and pissed-up pirates in an attempt to prevent LeChuck from carrying out his sinister plans.

"*The Curse of Monkey Island* will include all the elements that made the series great, but with a highly stylised, high resolution look that could not have been accomplished before," says co-project leader Jonathan Ackley. Graphically much has changed, with full



(Below) Shiver me timbers, it's the evil LeChuck! What a handsome chap.



Jedi Knight in all its glory, incoming Imperial Scout Walker. Even the legs wobble when you destroy the head section.

screen, film-quality animation playing a huge part in the proceedings, and so far it looks rather special. All the usual hilarity and brilliant puzzle-solving madness will feature, and from the game dubbed as "ideal for the pirate in all of us" how could it be otherwise?

Finally, and briefly: new Jedi Knight shots! PC Zone recently had a go of the latest version and can report our complete and utter pant-wetting approval. Scout Walkers, polygonal Imperial forces (including all the recognisable bounty hunters), plus a particularly impressive 'humming' Light Sabre were already present, even though there's still much yet to be added to the game.

All three of the above titles are slated for an early '97 release, so watch out for full previews in an upcoming issue. Until then point your Web browser at <http://www.lucasarts.com> for more information. Z



Rebellion: Kashyyk (highlighted red in this shot) is, I'm reliably informed, the home of Chewbacca. Fact fans take note.



Rebellion: The prospect of a C&C-style Star Wars game is bound to send waves of ecstasy through the gaming community.



Rebellion: Imperial Shuttle checking out a Rebel base hidden on some planet at the arse-end of nowhere?



Jedi Knight's many in-game characters are comprised of complex polygon models, rather than outdated bitmaps.

Darkness descends from Mindscape

Mindscape Bordeaux are French. Now normally we wouldn't allow anything French into the magazine, but we're so impressed by their games, we couldn't help ourselves.

SO WHAT HAVE MINDSCAPE BEEN UP TO LATELY, apart from infecting everyone's desktops with *Cat*? Well, PC Zone were recently privy to a private viewing of two of their latest projects, both of which are being developed across the pond in France by an ambitious new development team. Although both games looked fantastic in the graphics department, the one that really caught our eye was *Dark Earth*. Apparently first in a series of games to be set in the Dark Earth universe, this action/adventure is already shaping up to be one of the games of 1996. Based three centuries into the future, our light and airy planet has been transformed into a thick ball of murky fog - not to be the result of a meteorite collision at the beginning of the third millennium. So legend has it, the truth may be something entirely different, but that will be for the player to find out. Wonderful high-res graphics portray a world of doom and decay. Characters, rendered real-time, move convincingly, gesticulating in a manner that would fool even Desmond Morris on an off day. Amazing little



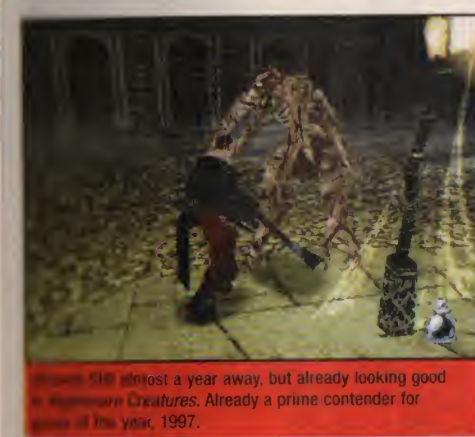
(Left) In the sewers *Dark Earth* begins to get a touch messy. Nothing to do with polygon turds, just lashings and lashings of blood.

touches, such as the way the characters hold objects in their hands, or the mood-based interaction system made our trousers rise in anticipation. *Dark Earth* is due for an early '97 and PC Zone will be doing big things with it in the very near future - so watch out.

Mindscape Bordeaux also have a second game in development called *Nightmare Creatures* which is also looking rather spiffy, even though there's still a year

left before it'll be completed. Again in full 3D, but this time based in London circa 1834, *Nightmare Creatures* appears more action oriented than *Dark Earth*, with shedloads of hand-to-hand combat spread over 15 districts including sewers, cemeteries, Westminster and the Docks.

For more info on these games, check out <http://www.mindscape.com>. Z



Nightmare Creatures almost a year away, but already looking good. A prime contender for 1997.



(Above) London back in the olden days was never like this. Except maybe around Liverpool Street Station after closing time. Welcome to *Nightmare Creatures*.



(Above) Set three centuries into the future, *Dark Earth* sees our 'warm' and 'wonderful' planet portrayed as a murky, horrible dustball. So no change there then.

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M.A.X. is a game featuring the item(s) above - Interplay do not really sell weapons of global destruction. We will not supply bombs, tanks or fighters to anyone (even if you are over 18 with a full driving licence). But you can have a FREE demo.

Under Construction

IMAGINE A SIM CITY TYPE GAME THAT DOESN'T DISAPPEAR UP ITS OWN ARSE WITH TONS OF BORING STATISTICS. IMAGINE A RESOURCE MANAGEMENT GAME WITH gorgeous graphics and interesting characters you can interact with in real-time. Add a hefty dollop of OTT humour and you've got *Constructors* from Acclaim, an impressive little people management number that was one of the most original and entertaining games we saw at the recent European Computer Trade Show. The general idea of the game is develop your own housing estate, while at the same time spoiling your enemies chances of developing his. There are lots of ways you can do this: a particularly fun tactic is to send lots of thugs around to his estate to have lots of wild parties, drink lots of beer, and generally wreck the place. His tenants will then piss off to pastures new (with any luck it will be your estate they go to) and his properties will go down in value accordingly. You can also send ghosts around to scare his tenants off (honest) and send in football hooligans to 'disturb the peace' in their own inimitable style (screaming 'Oll' repeatedly is their main tactic). All in all, *Constructors* is looking very promising indeed and you can be sure we'll be keeping a close eye on how it's shaping up.

For more info contact Acclaim on 0171 344 5000. Z



As well as building houses, you get to choose what kind of kitchen each house gets. Girls will love it.



(Above) Constructors sports some of the nicest graphics and animations we've seen for this type of game.

Starcraft and Diablo

If the software industry had an award for 'best newcomer' Blizzard Entertainment would have almost certainly won it last year. Now with a reputation to live up to, the whole world is waiting for the next big thing...

RELATIVELY UNKNOWN UNTIL THE SMASH HIT *Warcraft II* arrived on the scene, Blizzard are now enjoying a period of ego-boosting prosperity and are currently producing some of the best games available on the PC at the moment. Good news it that there are more to follow in the upcoming months.

Starcraft, a real-time strategy game of interstellar combat, is similar in execution to the *Warcraft* games, but this time wrapped in a shiny new sci-fi coating. Three races - Terran, Protoss, and Zerg - collide in an attempt to gain dominance. Again, multi-player action is the order of the day with modem and serial options allowing up to eight players to battle it out in the same game. Rather than simply rushing out

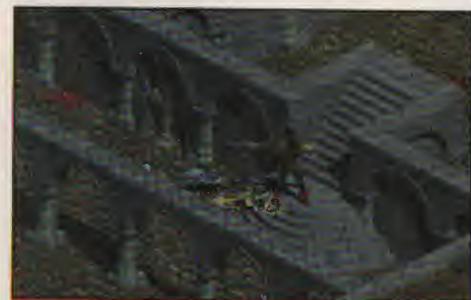
a space version of *Warcraft* the developers have instead spent some time updating much of the AI (so your forces don't end up trapped behind fiddly bits of scenery) and are currently working on some truly weird and wonderful weapons of future war. The game is to be released in February under the ZBLAC label and will no doubt attract a great deal of attention when it arrives.

Before that, though, Blizzard are to unleash *Diablo* - a deceptively simple RPG set in a

monster-ridden labyrinth beneath a decaying town. As the player ventures deeper into the catacombs they will discover weapons, armour, and magical treasures, and develop greater skills and abilities.

Other people are able to join in the hack and slash fun as the game has built-in support for battle.net, as well as modem, serial, and network play. Check out the demo on this month's cover disc, then watch for a full review next month.

More Blizzard info is available at <http://www.blizzard.com>. Z



(Above) Diablo's isometric viewpoint will have the critics shouting 'Ultima VIII clone!'. Ignore them - they're idiots.



(Above) Starcraft will once again feature that tab click-and-drag interface that made *Warcraft II* such a breeze to play.



Get 'im RAMBO



GENE WARS,™ a totally new strategy war game from the creators of Populous® and Theme Park.™ available on PC-CD

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SOCCER BOSS PICKS BUTT, COX, SEAMAN & DICKS

Ivan Ardon (formerly Gavin Smith), manager of Athletic Wednesday is rumoured to have spent £6m on his new signings. When asked if his player selection is based on shrewd management foresight, or just a product of his obsession with dirty words, he replied "Bugger off. I'm playing with my floppy." Tragic.

Championship Manager 96-97 is available for PC CD ROM, Amiga and as an update disk for Championship Manager 2.

What they said about Championship Manager 2:

"QUITE SIMPLY THE BEST FOOTBALL MANAGEMENT SIM EVER RELEASED"
PC ZONE 92%

"BUY IT!"
COMPUTER LIFE 5/5



"THANK YOU GOD FOR BRINGING ME CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER"
PC REVIEW 9/10
"SIMPLY THE BEST"
PC HOME 92%

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 96-97

YOU'RE IN CHARGE NOW



EIDOS INTERACTIVE



Games landslide from Psygnosis

Psygnosis remain as prolific as ever, with no less than 12 new PC releases on the way over the next four months.

EVERYONE'S ALREADY TALKING ABOUT WIPEOUT 2007, Blue Ice AND Destruction Derby 2 (see new shots adorning this page), all of which will be out come Christmas. The full list, though, can now be fully revealed.

Ecstasia II, funnily enough the sequel to Andrew Spencer's seminal adult-only adventure game, looks great now that the graphics have been updated to support a high resolution display. This time there's a demonic sorcerer somewhere out there, and he's stolen your home. His evil worshippers hound you as chaos rages and your homeland falls under the influence of some deep midsummer magic. Ecstasia II will last a little longer than the original did, which, for most people, ended abruptly after only two days of solid play.

Dead fans will raise an eyebrow or two at Zombieville, an Alone In The Dark-style point-and-click adventure about a reporter on the Washington Daily News who uncovers a sinister military base in the heart of small-town America. What he finds there we'll have to wait and see, but you can be sure it'll want to eat



anything with a pulse. Zombieville is scheduled for the end of the year, but look out for a huge preview next month.

Monster Truck games are fashionable at the moment - Gremlin are working on one such game, Microsoft have one reviewed this very issue, and Psygnosis have the aptly titled Monster Trucks scheduled for the end of the year. Created by Reflections (the team behind Destruction Derby), this game includes Long Distance Endurance Rally, Short Circuit Racing, Stunt Challenges and Time Trials. Lens flare fans can also get their kicks in Monster Truck, which promises to be a graphical tour de force of mountainous, heavily texture-mapped terrain.

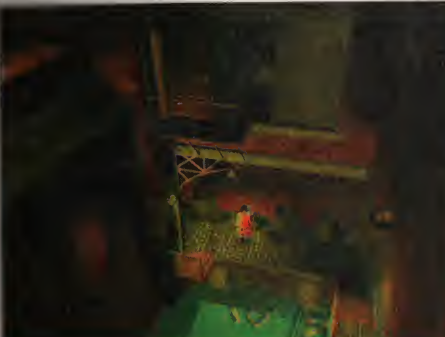
Of a similar vein (well, you get to drive things) is The Fallen, only this time the game is based in a futuristic setting with a sinister

police force hunting down undesirables in a sprawling metropolis racked with crime. Up to four players are able to fight it out in a number of fully interactive vehicles, even resorting to hand-to-hand if the situation dictates it.

Psygnosis have a number of stylish adventures on the cards too. City Of The Lost Children is based on the motion picture released earlier this year and features motion captured animations and a riddle laden plot adapted from the film itself. On the visual front City Of The Lost Children looks set to break new ground - as you can see from the shots on this page, the backdrops are lavishly rendered, evoking a dark, brooding atmosphere. Sentient is a chat-heavy RPG with an unconventional approach to the genre, and The Island Of Dr Moreau sees HG Wells time-travelling onto the PC for the first time (in letterbox format no less!). All will see the light of day within the next three or four months.

Finally, comes Alphastorm and Athanor. The former owing its existence to Elite, Privateer et al - the latter a futuristic sports game based on characters from ancient Greek mythology.

And that, dear brethren, is about it for now, but if you want more information try <http://www.psygnosis.com>. Phew. Z



(Above) Ecstasia II: "Vice squad! The growing of ellipsoid hemp is illegal. We're going to have to ask you to leave."



(Above) Sporting the best lens flare and chunky tyres that money can buy - Monster Trucks.



(Above) Melt's many creatures are constructed in a simple manner, but the texture maps are of a very high standard. Well, it worked well enough with Quake, didn't it?

Melt

Iron Maiden's zombie skeleton mascot Eddie raises hell in his very first computer game outing.

AS IF WE EVER NEEDED IT, IRON MAIDEN'S TWISTED MASCOT EDDIE IS to be star of the show in a new all-action game to be released through Funsoft at the end of the year. Melt's developers Virtual Studios owe much of their new technology to years of experience working in the field of VR, and their new game reflects this.

The concept of Melt centres around eleven capsules, or 'pods', that have been scattered throughout time - the objective being, to collect them all before confronting Eddie himself. Featuring heavy metal music by Iron Maiden and visualised in an array of psychedelic styles - all within a full 3D world - Melt does not follow a sequential script. Instead the player is allowed to customise the length of a single game to whatever fits their real world lifestyle - 30 minutes or many hours, it's up to you. But at the end of the day it's the blasting that counts and Melt promises to keep the trigger finger moving at a vigorously constant rate.

For more information go to <http://www.melt.com>. Z

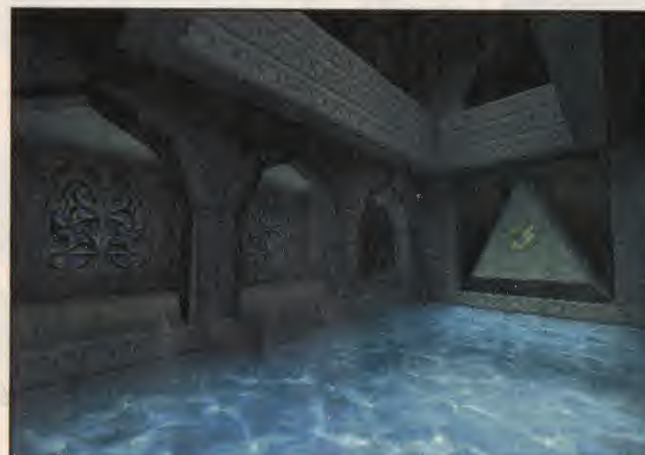


(Above) Melt's many creatures are constructed in a simple manner, but the texture maps are of a very high standard. Well, it worked well enough with Quake, didn't it?

"Unreally?!"

Unreal has finally been snapped up by a big name games publisher. Guess who that could be...

NEWS HAS JUST COME IN THAT GT INTERACTIVE are the lucky buggers who've signed the much talked-about Unreal from Epic Megagames. This revolutionary new 3D graphics engine has been whipping up a frenzy in the



(Above) No, this is not a pre-rendered shot. Unreal's 3D engine is capable of the most amazing tricks. Players will be able to use it to design their own levels and buildings.

Internet community for quite some time now, with speculation running rife as to who would eventually pick up the title for a world-wide release.

Before now, all that had been seen were a few screenshots and a couple of ropery AVIs, but having seen (and played) the game we can report that iD do, at last, have some serious competition on their hands.

Running under Windows 95, Unreal at the moment is an engine without a game (a criticism that some may level at Quake), but what an engine

it is. Boasting an incredible array of display features, the true 3D environment is capable of running in up to 1024 x 768 in 24-bit colour. Dynamic lighting effects cast real-time shadows - particularly impressive when firing off a light-emitting weapon, such as a turnip on fire. MIP mapping has enabled the programmers to incorporate focus-shifting effects, which will blur nearby objects if you get up close to them. It's also been mentioned that the player's vision will blur momentarily if a headshot



is taken. Cool! Monster-wise Epic aren't giving too much away, but the fat bastards with in-built gun hands

(see pic) look pretty mean already.

Pentium machines with in-built MMX™ technology will be able to take advantage of a huge range of graphical enhancements, not to mention significant performance improvements.

We've also heard that MicroProse have licensed the engine from Epic, but they're not allowed to release any of their Unreal games until Autumn next year. GT are looking at a spring release for their title, more details of which we'll bring as soon as we have them. Until then try either <http://www.epicgames.com> or <http://www.gtinteractive.com>. Z

There goes The Neverhood...

Microsoft and Hollywood team up to make the games that dreams are made of.

UK GAMESPLAYERS WILL SOON BE able to see the first fruits of the partnership between some of the biggest names in the entertainment and computer industries when DreamWorks Interactive, the joint venture between Bill Gates' Microsoft and DreamWorks SKG (headed by Steven Spielberg, David Geffen and Jeffrey Katzenberg - hence the SKG tag) release their first PC game at the end of October.

The Neverhood is a Pentium-only point-and-click adventure with a difference. The difference being the game's graphics have been shot digitally using a 'claymation' style of animation, in much the same way that Wallace and Gromit came to life through the genius of Nick Park and Aardman Animations.

"Most 3D art in games these days looks too robotic," said project leader Doug TenNapel, ex-Shiny Entertainment programmer, "but we wanted to bring some 'life' into our games by using clay animation for the visuals." Over three tons of clay was used during production, most of which went into the huge purpose-built sets (the biggest measuring almost 25 foot square!). Ancient conspiracies and moral decision-making is the order of the day, with a liberal dousing of humour carrying the story through its sometimes adult and often serious course. The Neverhood will be reviewed in full next issue. Z



Trash-It!

Tool up for the ultimate frenzy of devastation as the greatest orgy of destruction smashes its way onto your PC.

OBVIOUSLY BIG FANS OF BEAVIS AND BUTT HEAD, THOSE DESTRUCTIVE chaps at Rage appear to have devised a harmless way in which to pulverise anything and everything in their latest arcade platform romp entitled Trash-It! With three modes of play, up to 16 players can quash their pent-up aggression as they tear down concrete and steel with a variety of different hammers and implements.

The story tells of the evil Dr. Moonbeam who has arrived in town, planting thousands of concrete seeds (whatever they are), in order to trap the inhabitants and have his wicked way with them. As Jack Hammer, the Herculean saviour of the timid, trapped civilians, your task will be to demolish mammoth concrete buildings and crush the stone empire of Dr. Moonbeam and his wily band of cronies.

Out in December, over one hundred levels of rubble-reducing, multi-player action should keep the midnight oil burning, especially if these impressive screenshots are anything to go by. Z



(Left) Break it! Break it! Uh, huh, huh.

two bandits on my tail.

ingo fuel



gear damaged

both wingmen down

TO EJECT?

Way! You're flying Super EF2000 - Europe's 21st century air-superiority fighter, armed with the most sophisticated defensive and offensive systems known to man. Proclaimed the best of its kind by the world's leading PC magazines, EF2000 is now available on Windows '95, with a wealth of exciting new features. Such as an enhanced version of our war operation system, which puts you in the middle of a thousand plane war. Or the new mission editor for precise tactical control of your flights. There's even a custom-editor that lets you construct the most awesome aerial battles ever seen. And for the ultimate challenge, there's a host of multi-player options that let you fight real-live opponents.

TIME TO GET SOME HELP?

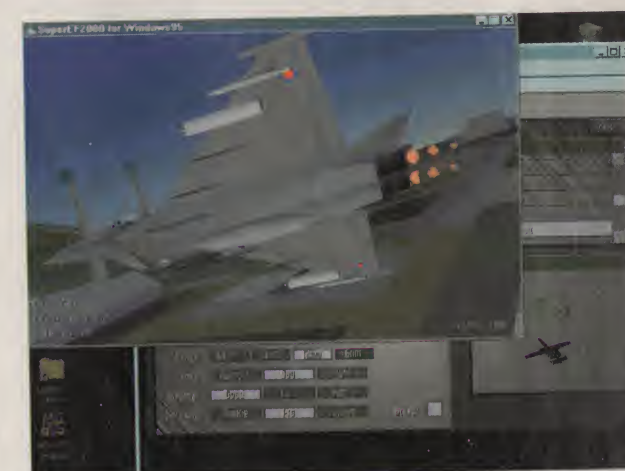
The real counterpart EF2000 is designed to be easy for pilots to fly. Yet even real pilots know when to buckle-down, swallow their pride and ask for help. Super EF2000 gives you instant access to a context-sensitive, multimedia pilot training system. Exploiting the Windows format to its fullest, Super EF2000 employs point-and-click graphics for rapid access to vital info - precisely when you need it most.

Fly Super EF2000 on your PC - the ultimate combat flight simulation for Windows '95.

PC Zone - 97%: the highest scoring game ever reviewed.
Computer Gaming World - best simulation game of the year, 1996.

SUPER EF 2000

Windows 95



Goodness reflects the light; and evil, bears the seed of all darkness



Queen – The Eye

Thunderbolts and lightning – very, very frightening!

DESPITE THE UNFORTUNATE DEMISE OF THEIR MOUSTACHIOED FRONTMAN some five years ago, dubiously-coiffured pomp rockers Queen simply refuse to die. Not content with the suspicious regularity of the discovery of 'long lost tracks', their twitching corpse looks set to receive a further lease of life with the release by Electronic Arts of *Queen – The Eye*, an action-adventure crafted around the music and imagery of the band. For those not comfortable with Queen's unique brand of camp pomposity and lyrical ambiguity, it sounds like a horrible idea. But die-hard fans can rest easy in the knowledge that this potentially worrying example of the music/gaming crossover can be nestling safely in their stockings this Christmas.

Cast as the heroic Dubroc, the player is charged with the task of overcoming numerous complex obstacles in each of five futuristic, post-apocalyptic domains, each inspired by the iconography of a key Queen album. Whether the scenario associated with *A Day At The Races* will involve betting through the card at Kempton Park is unconfirmed, but some interesting concepts are possible, particularly when you consider that Queen once had an album called *Jazz*, replete with a free poster of hundreds of naked women straddling bicycles. Scaramouche, scaramouche, can you do the fandango? **Z**



(Above) Another idea to cash in on dead Freddie's popularity, or a brave effort to unite games and music?

It's a bit of an 'Animal'

Game of the film, yeah – but game of the TV advert?
Are spicy sausages really *that* popular?

AVID TELLY WATCHERS WILL BE NO DOUBT BE PLEASED TO HEAR THAT the cult sausage hero of those extremely loud and violent Peperami adverts is about to become a cult sausage hero in an extremely loud and violent computer game of his own.

The sausage that makes your breath stink takes centre stage in *Animal*, a seemingly riotous adventure game based in the town of Snackopolis, and co-starring the likes of the Disco Biscuit, Yoghurt 'Potstitutes' and Carlos the Carrot. Hmm. Rescuing the captured Dr. Peper Einstein, is the primary goal, which involves a large amount of logical thinking and puzzle on the way. Ade Edmondson is being paid sackloads of cash to provide some of the voices in what has been described as the 'first ever Sausage Role-Playing Game' (groan). *Animal* mixes traditional point-and-clickery jiggy pokery with a smattering of *Doom*-style shooting and is held together with a variety of 3D visuals spread over 120 locations. By 'eck – the mind boggles.

Developed by Microtime Media for Ocean, *Animal* will be out in November. Unless, of course, the stupid thing doesn't eat itself before we get a nibble ourselves. For more info call Microtime Media on 0181-466 1566. **Z**



(Above) Indulge in a sausage-fingered shenanigans with the star of the Peperami telly ads.

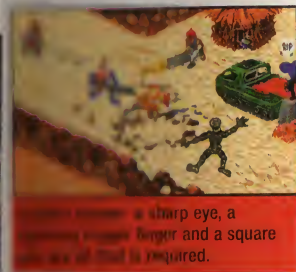
3DO on PC

After licensing their much anticipated M2 technology to Matsushita for a cool \$100 million, 3DO now has money to spend developing games for other people's machines.

STUDIO 3DO, THE INTERNAL PUBLISHING AND DEVELOPMENT ARM OF THE well-known 3DO Company, has announced a host of games currently under development for the PC platform. The first batch of titles will feature original content customised for Windows 95 with releases planned in the run up to Christmas.

Quasar, a mindlessly violent blaster first seen on the ill-fated *Quasar* arcade, is due any time now. We thoroughly approve of *Quasar's* 3D rapid fire action and, spread over ten gruelling missions, the cheek nature of the gameplay will undoubtedly appeal to those who shoot 'em up fans the world over.

Quasar, an 'on-the-rails' shoot 'em up that didn't do too well on the arcade, and *Deathlon* are both on the verge of release, as is the much talked about Internet role-playing extravaganza *Meridian 59* (see our On-line section for further details). Studio 3DO's *Game Guru* 'game enhancer' (or cheating device) just missed our deadline and will be reviewed next issue.



(Above) Quasar: a sharp eye, a cunning finger and a square jawed foe are required.

Further down the line (December to be precise), and paying homage to the classic arcade game *Super Sprint*, *Nitro Racers* is one of those single screen, overhead racing games that caters for multi-player sessions without the need for network. **Z**

Space Orb gamepad

Who needs VR when you've got a gamepad like this?

IF REAL LIFE PEOPLE DON'T THINK ABOUT HOW THEY MOVE, THEY JUST use it. With 3D games, players are limited to the 2D capabilities of the keyboard, mouse or joystick but the *Space Orb 360* breaks the barrier of standard linear keyboard or joystick control with full digital 360 degree control in any and every direction. Simply twist, pull or push the *Space Orb's* PowerSensor ball to move fluidly through six directions and Bob's yer uncle!

Six fully programmable buttons and a convenient *Space Orb's* utility helps personalise the *Space Orb* to the player's very own style of play. More info can be found at <http://www.spacetec.com> **Z**



Suck, don't blow

Praise the lord as a tiny vacuum cleaner marks the triumphant re-introduction of 'Anorak Corner'.

SOME LIFE NEEDS REVITALISING? DOG NEEDS GROOMING? OR COULD YOUR keyboard do with a quick once over? Answer yes to any of the above and you could do with getting hold of the new *Mini Vacuum Cleaner* from Jessop. Priced at an incredible £9.99 and looking more like an electric toothbrush than anything else, the *Mini Vacuum Cleaner* is ideal for use on electrical equipment, such as stereos and computers. The kit includes a dustbag for the vacuum, angled nozzle plus a bottle of cleaning spray, cloth, lint-free tissues and cotton buds. How can you afford not to get one?

Available from your local Jessop shop or by mail order on 0144 232 0432. **Z**



These are the mirrors of the soul, reflections of the mind...



Look to the
spirit, for
there lies the
battleground...

Ubisoft threesome Four new games from Gremlin

The world was wowed by Ubisoft's original *Rayman*. Now there's news of a follow-up, plus two new racing games too.

ONE OF THE FIRST EVER GAMES TO MAKE USE OF INTEL'S MMX GRAPHICS accelerator technology will be Ubisoft's new futuristic racing game *POD*. In fact, Intel were so pleased with the performance of the software that they have been using early versions to show off what their new co-processor can do. It is claimed that *POD* is capable of running in a resolution of 640x480 at a rate of 30 frames per second, although a P120 is required to achieve this kind of speed. So far, features include; horizontal split screen play; new, downloadable tracks from the Ubisoft web site; bundled cable for serial play; 12 different tracks; and eight-player modem, LAN or Internet options. *POD* will be out in December.

Before that, though, comes the long-awaited PC version of *Street Racer*. A hit some years ago on the 8-bit consoles, PC *Street Racer* offers similar 'madcap' Mario Kart action, but this time runs at 60 frames per second and boasts eight player simultaneous action, instead of the usual four.

Last, but not least, comes news of a follow-up to the hugely enjoyable platform romp *Rayman*. Provisionally entitled *Rayman II*, the lovable, limbless freak returns next Spring in a new adventure. Let's just hope this time that the game is slightly more forgiving than its predecessor. Which was bloody difficult to say the least.

But anyway, <http://www.ubisoft.com> holds all the answers. Z



Enhanced and updated, the ancient *Street Racer* returns, this time on the PC.



Sweet as the moment when the *POD* when pop... Now where's Patsy Kensit?

Grolier than thou

Relative newcomers to the games scene, Grolier Interactive have signed up the ubiquitous Simis to keep the ball rolling.

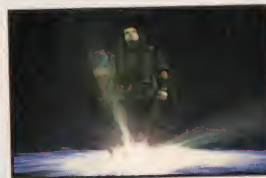
THESE DAYS, WHEREVER YOU turn you'd have to be blind (or worse, *without a head*), to miss spotting a PC game by London-based developers Simis. With titles on the go for both Warner and Eidos, it came as a bit of a surprise to hear that two more of their games have been swiped for a release through Grolier Interactive.

It's still early days yet, but *PC Zone* recently got a sneak peek at *Solar Wars* and an, as yet, unnamed Solar System simulator that will be part game and part educational. The former title promises complex heads-up combat against waves and waves of attacking alien forces, whereas the latter is said to be a more sedate affair – encouraging exploration and discovery, rather than death and destruction. Grolier claim that Simis are in the process of constructing a blindingly accurate model of our very own solar system for this game. Let's just hope it doesn't take 50 years to get from one planet to another, otherwise things may become a little tedious. Z



Since the release of *Euro 96*, Gremlin Interactive have, at last, something more to shout about.

HORROR AND GORE ABOUND IN *REALMS OF THE HAUNTING*, the biggest and most expensive game Gremlin have ever put out since *Euro 96*. Mixing first-person adventuring with state-of-the-art SGI cut-scenes, *Realms Of The Haunting* tells the story of young adventurer



hunk Randall – a man trapped inside the nightmare world of evil wrong-doer Belial. Top coder Tony Crowther and his team have been working long and hard on a new 3D engine based on what we first saw in *Realms Of The Haunting* some months ago. Two hours of video footage, motion captured 3D models and a variety of unusual and interesting weapons mix together to form a more terrifying adventure ever seen on a PC.

Realms Of The Haunting is a more straightforward cross of flying and blasting action set in the enormous city of Misplaced Optimism. Despite the silly name, this huge conurbation is intricately constructed of an infinite number of massive buildings – the ultimate goal being to escape from the confines of the city.

Two ancient families fighting for control of a sandy planet sounds very similar to Frank Herbert's *Dune*, if you ask me, but we won't hold that against it. Dedicated to the preservation of the house of set, you are 'of the elite', the people of Osiris born for a purpose, to pilot the ancient sandships of the Gods and bring glory and freedom to the Horus empire.

Finally, there's *Re-Loaded* – the follow-up to the successful PlayStation shoot 'em up *Loaded*. Featuring even more brutal violence, it blasts its way PC-wards in November. For more information look up <http://www.gremlin.com>. Z

DID's F22

Well, whaddaya know?! Another F22 simulator on the way! Not that anyone's complaining.

DID, MASTERS OF ALL THINGS FLIGHT-RELATED, RECENTLY UNVEILED *F22* to stunned audiences at the recent European Computer Trade Show in London.

Based under Windows 95, *F22* not only improves massively on *EF2000*'s graphics and depth, but version 2.0 of the proven WarGen campaign

simulator is now much easier to use and control in the field of combat. Created in conjunction with the authoritative world Air Power Journal, *F22* incorporates all of the latest technological and intelligence gathering facilities, plus a new and improved 3D engine for advanced graphics performance. Accelerated versions are also possible, taking advantage of the new range of graphics cards available on the market, sales of which may rocket once this is released towards the end of the year.



Pushing the envelope with *F22*. DID have really outdone themselves with this baby. Just wait 'til you see it moving.

DID's web site is at <http://www.did.com> for more information. Z

CHOOSE WELL



REALMS of the HAUNTING



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Tel: (0114) 279 9020. Fax: (0114) 276 8581.
Web site: <http://www.gremlin.com>.



Dispatches

GT boosts support

GT Interactive have overhauled their technical helpline in light of the recent *Quake* release. The company have appointed the UK-based support specialist Softbank PSC to handle their entire range of titles across Europe, providing unlimited support in English, French and German. The majority of calls are expected to be installation queries, mainly from *Quake* which was expected to ship around 400,000 copies on its first day of release.

Naked Gun game?

News is filtering through of a licensed *Naked Gun* game from *Discworld II* developer, Perfect Entertainment. Nothing has actually been seen yet, but expect a 3D driving section (complete with red flashing light on top of the car, no doubt) with mad bits that allow the player to zip past naked girls frolicking around in communal showers. Ahem. Watch this space...

Sid Meier signs to Origin

News of Sid Meier signing with Origin was met with a mixture of surprise and anticipation in the office this month. No news of what his first project is to be but as soon as we find out, you'll be the first to know.

Sega and Namco do Power VR

So impressed were Sega with VideoLogic's new *PowerVR* accelerator card that they've signed a development contract to take advantage of its awesome power. Namco are already working on titles for the system – a joint venture between VideoLogic and NEC – with *Rave Racer* slated as a first release. Although no one will comment on what Sega are planning to release in support of the card, *Virtua Fighter 3* seems like a sure-fire bet.

Wing Commander TV series

US TV audiences are currently being wowed by a new 13-part *Wing Commander* animated series that should make its way over the pond sometime next year. Actors Mark Hamill, Malcolm McDowell and Tom Wilson have reprised their roles by lending their voice talents to the show. Described as '*Wing Commander: The Early Years*', *Wing Commander Academy* is set 20 years before the first *Wing Commander* game. The new series traces the exploits of Blair and his wingmen as they are thrown into battle with the Kilrathi during their last year of training.

Producer Larry Latham commented: "The show is very cinematic, as opposed to cartoony, very stylised in its approach, but still grounded in the covenants of good story-telling."

Unsurprisingly, Origin have mooted a 'game of the TV series of the game' using cartoon animation instead of the usual live action stuff.

Grand Prix Manager 2

As everyone that played it knows, the original *Grand Prix Manager* from MicroProse had a few problems in the bug department. But *Grand Prix Manager 2* promises to make up for earlier discrepancies. This latest sim will give the player complete control over every aspect of managing and developing a world famous racing team through a massive ten season campaign. From driver contract negotiation through testing and sponsorship finance, *Grand Prix Manager 2* is sure to knock the socks off F1 enthusiasts that like their games, er, detailed.

Grand Prix Manager 2 will be Windows-only and is slated for release later this year. For more info check out <http://www.microprose.com>.

Risky business from Hasbro

Big bucks board game manufacturer Hasbro announced a ton of new PC games recently. Here's an update of what's currently on the cards.

Since news filtered through last month of game giant Hasbro's intention to develop and publish a whole range of PC titles based on their well-known board games, we can report that more announcements have been made.

Trillion-selling *Risk* is to be enhanced for the CD-ROM format. "The game's timeless strategic challenge has allowed us to create a true multimedia gaming experience which adds an extra dimension without ever losing



(Above) Five versions of *Yahtzee* on just the one CD.



(Above) Humiliate your friends by crushing them in the PC version of *Risk*.

that essential *Risk* feel," said Clive Robert, head of Development at Hasbro Interactive.

In addition, versions of *Cluedo* and *Yahtzee* are also in the pipeline. Cambridge-based Millennium Interactive have also been signed by Hasbro to develop two further games for a '97 release – one an interactive version of *Beast Wars*, the other Hasbro are keeping tight-lipped about. Z

Eidos' Winter Collection

Not content with the 20 or so PC titles currently have in production, Eidos Interactive had to go and complicate things by announcing even more...

OLD SUPERHEROES NEVER DIE – THEY JUST END UP IN THEIR OWN COMPUTER GAME. THE INCREDIBLE HULK – *The Pathenon Saga* is the latest attempt to bring credibility to a big green man who wears ripped purple trousers and growls a lot. As anyone who has seen the dreadful *The Death Of The Incredible Hulk* knows, this is a high-on impossible task, but this didn't prevent Eidos from having a shot at it. Developed by Attention To Detail (previously big into Atari Jaguar development although the less said about that the better), *The Pathenon Saga* mixes two and three-dimensional adventuring with beat 'em up and puzzle-solving elements. If The Hulk is your thing, mark November in your diary and start saving up.

Newly announced *Full-On F1* is a no-holes-barred racing game that avoids the complexities of the likes of *F1GP2* in favour of instantaneous action and exhilarating speed. A heavy emphasis has been placed on the crash and bash nature of Formula 1 motor racing which, although hardly authentic, I'm sure will be great fun. All the drivers, teams, tracks and cars of the 1995 season have been licensed for inclusion in the game with a whole host of camera angles in which the action can be viewed. Developers Teque have the chequered flag in sight so expect a review in the next issue of *PC Zone*.

Finally from Eidos comes *Terracide* – a *Descent* beater from those semi-famous guys and gals down at Simis. Having been responsible for a whole host of authentic flight combat sims in the past (not to mention the heavyweight *Flight Sim Toolkit*) Simis have turned their hand, and their advanced 3D graphics engine, to more futuristic matters in a tale of invading alien forces and lone crusaders battling it out in space. Already looking visually magnificent, *Terracide* is not due until August '97 so that's about all you're gonna get from us for now.

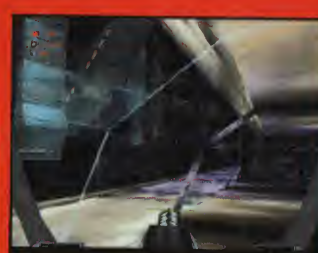
Eidos' web site has more details on all of the above three games on <http://www.eidos.com>. Z



Full-On F1 dispenses with the complexities of Formula 1 racing.



The brain of David Banner and the brawn of The Hulk; combined at long last.



Incredible graphics, but still a year away, *Terracide*.

PC CD ROM

soul hunt

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Arthur C. Clarke's RAMA

It's been a book, and now it's about to become a game. Is *RAMA* destined to be remembered as 'the party that everyone wanted to go to' instead?

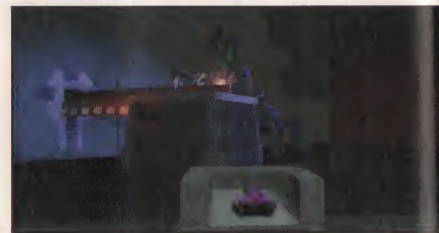
RAMA STARTED OUT AS A SERIES OF CULT novels (which sold more than seven million copies world-wide) from the pen of Arthur C. Clarke – the acknowledged master of modern sci-fi and author of *2001: A Space Odyssey* – and Gentry Lee, chief engineer at NASA (most notably for his involvement in the mission to explore Jupiter). The authors devised the game themselves, and bring to it not only an intimate knowledge of the universe of RAMA and their own experience of space technology, but also a humanistic vision.

Sierra On-Line are to release the game before Christmas and seem very proud of what their developers have achieved, dubbing the game "a turning point in the history of multi-media". More than 3000 3D scenes tell the story of a team of brilliant scientists on a mission to explore the mysteries of an ancient alien civilisation. The adventure is even helped along by FMV advice from the great Mr Clarke himself.

Similarities are apparent between Sierra's RAMA and LucasArts' *The Dig*, but it's more likely that the developers down at Skywalker



Ranch drew inspiration from the original RAMA novels, than the other way around. Information on any of Sierra On-Line's products, including RAMA, can be found at <http://www.sierra.com>.



HOTSHOTS

As part of the regular news service to our readers, this new section will feature brand new shots from games that, previously, we haven't been able to show you much of. Crikey, what top geezers we are.

INTERSTATE 76

Our first report of Activision's 'road movie game' *Interstate 76* appeared last issue, but there was little in the way of pics because not much has so far been shown. Now, having seen and played a very early version we can update our readers as to how it's looking. As mentioned previously, large Afros and 'Lionel Blairs' appear in abundance (the game being set in 1976 and all that), and there are twenty-five cars and twenty-five missions to contend with too.



RED BARON II

Anticipation is running high for Sierra's *Red Baron II* – an updated version of the now ancient prequel which first came out on the PC almost four years ago. These shots are still from a pretty early version of the game, but not a lot has been shown by Sierra so far. Remember, *PC Zone* readers saw them here first!



1943: EUROPEAN AIR WAR

Two years ago MicroProse brought out the completely brilliant *1942: Pacific Air War*, and a sequel has been on the cards for some time now. Using suggestions from users of *1942: Pacific Air War*, *1943: European Air War* changes the feel of the game to reflect the new theatre. Air combat in Europe was very different from the Pacific in many ways, so this new combat sim, out in December, is sure to be more than just the original with changed graphics.



JETFIGHTER III

Feast your eyes on these latest shots of *Jetfighter III*. Almost complete now, and looking completely spiv, *JF III* simulates not only the ubiquitous F22, but also the F14 and the F/A18. As a member of the UN Rapid Deployment Force, your mission is to combat aggression around the world. Tackle Argentinians as they battle for control of Chile, or if you're really up for trouble, circle the waters around Cuba. A full review should appear within the next couple of months.

SID MEIER'S CIVILIZATION II

THE COLLECTOR'S EDITION

Includes 20 New Scenarios plus the official strategy guide



PC Gamer 96% Game of the Month - highest score ever given! (March 96) "...even after four years, no strategy game has come close to Civilization. And now it's twice as good..." (also voted best game of all-time in top 100 PC games survey! June 96)

Edge 9/10 (May 96) "...quite simply an astonishing achievement... cannot be more highly recommended..."

Computer Life 5/5 Game of the Month (May 96) "...will take over your life...brilliant with knobs on...you can improve on perfection..."

GamesMaster 95% (April 96) "...one of the most complete and engrossing PC games ever...dangerously addictive...a work of genius, that's what it is..."

PC Format 90% (May 96) "...every now and then, a game comes along that's so good it changes people's perceptions of a genre... one of MicroProse's greatest releases ever... it's a must... could change your opinion of strategy games forever..."

PC Home 91% (April 96) "offers just about everything you could want..."

PC Zone 90% Recommended (Mar 96) "...exactly the right balance..."

Strategy Plus (USA) 5/5 Stamp of Approval (June 96)
CD-Rom Mag (France) 5/5 (June 96)
Gambler (Poland) 95% (May 96)
Hyper (Australia) 96% (April 96)
Micromania (Spain) 97%
Mikrobitti (Finland) 94% (May 96)
PC Player (Germany) 6/6 (May 96)
Riki (Czech Republic) 5/5 (April 96)

Once in a while a game comes along which captures the imagination of the world, crossing the line from 'Great' to 'Classic' status such a game is Sid Meier's Civilization® II

Gaining highest-ever scores from all over the world and winning the British Interactive Multimedia Association Best Game of 1996 award, Civilization® II is truly the best strategy game ever made...and there has never been a better time to experience the wonder of Civilization® II for yourself! A deluxe Collectors' Edition is out now, including the full 400-page official strategy guide from Prima, plus the new Conflicts in Civilization scenarios*. **THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE AWAITS YOU...**

For new release information and hints and tips on selected games call the MicroProse Classified Line on 0891 555 111. This call is more expensive than a normal call and will terminate after six minutes at a maximum cost of £2.94. Please seek permission of whoever pays the bill before you call.

*Conflicts in Civilization also available separately. Standard edition of Civilization® II still available.



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PC ZONE

our price

Welcome to *PC Zone's* very own version of *The Chart Show*, sponsored by Our Price. Each month it'll feature not only the most up-to-date chart listing the Top Ten best-selling PC CD-ROM titles, but it will also play host to exclusive news and competitions.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1
QUAKE
(iD/GT Interactive)
£29.99 | 6
COMMAND & CONQUER
(Virgin Interactive)
£32.99 |
| 2
Z + DIRECTOR'S CUT
(Bitmap Bros/Time Warner)
£29.99 | 7
SETTLERS 2
(Blue Byte)
£27.99 |
| 3
F1GP2
(MicroProse)
£29.99 | 8
DUKE NUKEM 3D
(EIDOS/US Gold)
£29.99 |
| 4
CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2
(EIDOS/Domark)
£17.99 | 9
SPACE HULK: VOTBA
(Electronic Arts)
£34.99 |
| 5
MEGARACE II
(Mindscape)
£34.99 | 10
GENDER WARS
(SCI)
£24.99 |

Welcome once again to our monthly Our Price page, bringing you the latest news and views from Our Price stores around the country. It's the easiest way to find out which games you should be checking out – just run your eyes over our countdown of the Top 10 best-selling PC CD-ROM titles. And what's more, we give you a chance to win all ten of them.

This month customers at Our Price will be able to take advantage of an exclusive offer when they buy a copy of *Z*, one of the hottest new games around – an offer not to be missed as it includes an extra CD containing the Director's cut version of the game! So make your way to your local Our Price sharpish before stocks run out.

Also available at selected Our Price stores will be *Quake*, set to be the biggest game ever!

If you want to take part in this month's Our Price Top 10 prize giveaway, put pen to paper and answer the question below. Good luck! Send your entries to the usual address.

OUR PRICE QUESTION: What is the name of the TV presenter in *MegaRace 2*?

Rules & Restrictions: All entries must be received by 15 November 1996. No correspondence will be entered into – if you ring us up we'll subject you to vitriolic abuse before bunging you into the lions' cage at London Zoo. The Editor's decision is final and the winners will be notified by post. All other usual restrictions apply, so don't even think about it, okay?

WATCH THIS SPACE FOR MORE NEWS FROM OUR PRICE NEXT MONTH!

DISCLAIMER: The Top 10 printed is correct at the time of going to press but positions, titles and prices may vary throughout the month.



He shall come to
earth granting all those
who serve under him
Ultimate Power, Knowledge
and Eternal Life and he shall
be of 3DO and bear the
symbol of The Game Guru.

1.10.96

Trips worth taking.

A journey in itself, this epic
adventure spans three highly
detailed planetary systems.

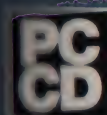
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seek to discover the secret
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Starring CLIVE OWEN, MATHILDA MAY, JOHN HURT, JURGEN PROHNOW, DAVID WARNER, AMANDA PRYS, DAVID MCCALLUM, BRIAN BLESSED,
AND CHRISTOPHER WALKEN as Hassan • Casting Director JEREMY ZIMMERMAN • Film Production Designers GRENVILLE HORNER AND PETER HIGGINS
• Editor ANDY WALTER • Musical Score by RAY SHULMAN • Director of Photography REX MAIDMENT • Screenplay by DIANE DUANE Additional
• Dialogue by PETER MILLIGAN • Live Action Producer DAVID HARRINGTON • Live Action Director STEVE HILLIER.



At home with...

REBELLION



(Above) All the tanks have been rendered at very high resolutions in 3D Studio or Softimage.



(Left) Smoke, shrapnel... that's no problem for JADE.

Things like "DRINK", and "FOOD", and "DANCE" - but also, intriguingly, "LOO". Now this can only mean one of three things:

Their toilet is so delightful, they felt it deserved to be publicised in the front window. Toilets are in short supply around Oxford, and therefore it is a bona fide selling-point. The window display was designed by an imbecile.

Most peculiar of all, the word "LOO" was placed immediately after the word "DANCE". Perhaps the two words were supposed to be one phrase, i.e. "DANCE LOO" - referring to a vast, strobe-lit lavatory where people reel and jig to the latest experimental drum and bass releases while simultaneously urinating all over the floor and each other. The next Big Thing? Readers in Oxford, please let me know.

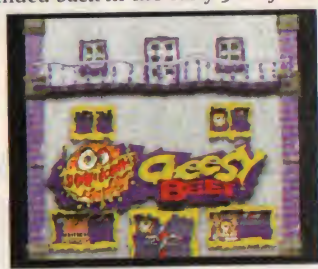


(Right) There are loads of shops in Mr Tank, most of which sell dubious stuff like this.

Rebellion Software
Anyhows, let me tell you a few things about Rebellion. Now, unless you count *Heartbeat* starring Nick Berry,

nothing is more boring than reading lists of facts about businesses. Therefore, to keep things interesting and spicy, I'm going to write it in the style of *The Sun*. Ready?

REBELLION software was founded back in the early 90s by HUNKY Jason Kingsley and his BEEFCAKE brother, Chris. Their first and so far, most famous release was *Aliens Vs Predator* on the Atari JAGUAR, a graphically STUNNING Doom-a-like which, despite a bit of MOANING from a few disgruntled KNOCKERS, nevertheless left most Atari



(Right and above right) Check out this wall art.

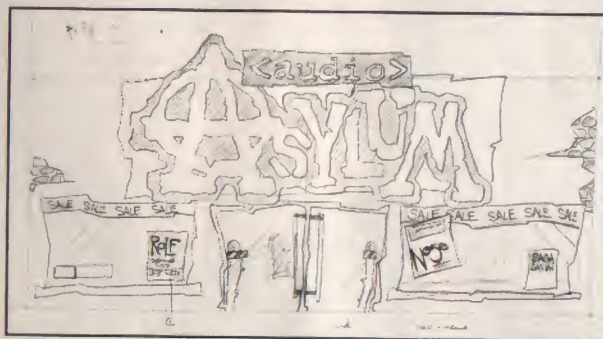
(Left) Garish maybe - but funky? Definitely.

"Gosh," said **Charlie Brooker** as he stepped off the train at Oxford Station, "I do hope I'm not late for my rendezvous with Rebellion Software." Because he talks like a twat in real life.

BEFORE I TELL YOU ALL ABOUT REBELLION, A BRIEF ASIDE: on my way from the aforementioned station to Rebellion's office in Magdalen Street, I passed by a small, fairly unassuming wine bar-cum-nightclub whose name escapes me at present. Anyway, the interesting thing about this venue was that it had a load of plastic



DATE	08-12-96	DEPARTMENT OF	TRANS NO.	08240
TIME	10.45	CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY	DOB	09.23.74
RUN NO.	5327	UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO	RAC	CAUCASIAN
		CONFIDENTIAL TO: XYD FDB JUV	SEX	FEMALE
PATIENT'S NAME: STURGESS, HEIDI G				
ART THERAPIST: PROFESSOR J.L. TUCKER				
AIM	OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME		
TO COMPARE AND ANALYSE TWO DRAWINGS	TO DIAGNOSE SUDDEN PERSONALITY CHANGE OF PATIENT	DRAWING A SEVERE DEPRESSION - PATIENT FEELS TRAPPED 'BOXED IN' - BORED THROUGH LACK OF VISUAL STIMULATION		
DRAWING A: 04.25.96		DRAWING B PATIENT HAS GONE THROUGH CATASTROPHIC EXPERIENCE - HIGHLY EXCITABLE - LIVES IN COLOURFUL FANTASY WORLD		
DRAWING B: 07.19.96		NOTE: PATIENT STOPPED PLAYING COMPUTER GAMES ON P.C. GIVEN PLAYSTATION IN MAY - THIS MAY ACCOUNT FOR CHANGE		



(Above & left) Hi-res & sketch

(Above right) The lovely talented and 'good-looking' Rebellion lot.

(Right) Another piece of 'wall art'. Rebellion has loads of art school-types.

(Below) Yet more giant, lalry, nasty-coloured tank nonsense.

OWNERS WRITING about in ECSTASY. Recently they've decided to focus on producing a KILLER range of PC-based games, which is why they've been BEAVERING away on Mr Tank, a fast-moving multi-player caterpillar-tread and COMBAT title with bright, cartoony graphics. And a really big pair of NAKED NUDE TITS."

("In true Sun tradition, this last sentence is an utter fabrication.")

The idea behind Mr Tank is fairly simple: kill or be killed. The action takes place within a series of chaotic urban environments (complete with loads of scenery to destroy), and is watched by a baying, jeering crowd. As I said, it's primarily a multi-player game. Currently, the game can support up to 16 players at once - without a network. Buh? Wuh?



(Right) Remember that opening scene in Blade Runner? Thank God you've got a good memory...

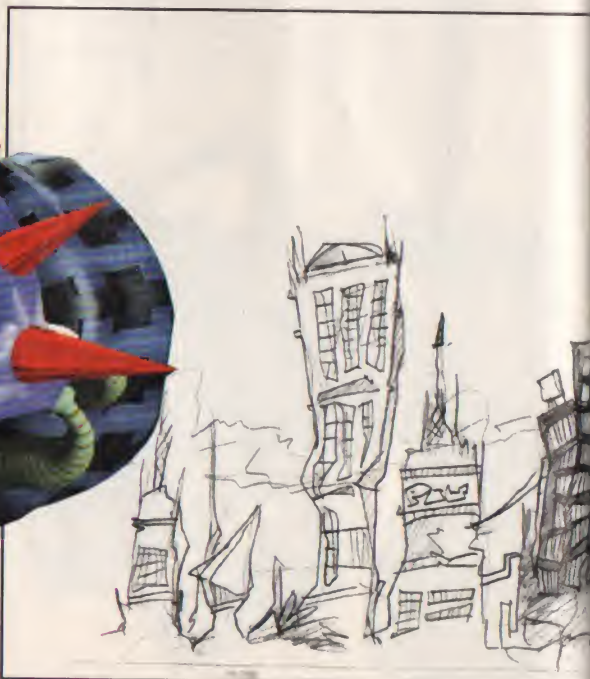


Well, okay. You're unlikely to want to crowd around one monitor with 15 of your mates, but it's a dramatic indication of the kind of thing that Rebellion's impressive 3D engine can muster without breaking into a sweat. While I was in their office, they quickly demonstrated how the game would look running at a 1024x768 resolution, with a 16-way split screen. On a 486 DX4-100. And it still ran at a frame rate that would shame many other games. Yes, it would shame them into staying indoors in a dark room and beating themselves with a cane, reciting prayers through a wall of sn and tears as they did so.

Brrrrm brrrrm

The 3D engine is known as JADE. Now, you might assume that this stands for something unbelievably complicated - like Juxtaposed Anti-aliasing Density Editing-system, but you'd be wrong. It actually stands for Jamie and Dan's Engine, because it was written by two blokes called Jamie and Dan. Aside from the impressive (and fairly ludicrous) 16-screens-on-one capability, it can also do all of the following:

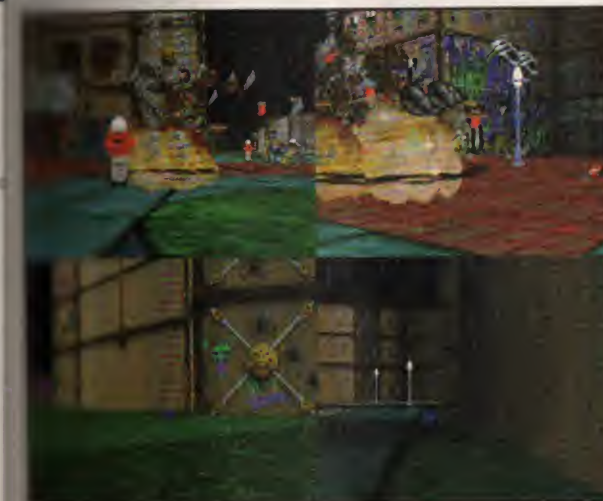
- Light sourcing (on everything in sight)
- High-resolution texture-mapping



- A colour-mode that makes 256 colour palettes look like 24-bit ones
- Support for over 3000 sprites on screen at once
- Multiple camera views (which can see right the way back to the horizon)

Transparency effects (such as smoke trails) and long video screens on walls and the like, featuring action in the current game

At this rate, it'll probably be able to hang-glide and whistle to the tune of *The Incredible Hulk* too, by the time it's released. Anyway, you get the point: they're very proud of the engine. Decent graphics or not, it'd all fall flat if the gameplay wasn't up to scratch. It's early days yet, but since



(Above) Play the game badly and these are the marks you'll get.

(Left) Jason and Chris. Play the game really badly and these guys will pay you a visit.

(Right) Play the game extremely badly, and this thing will roll right over you. Backwards. Twice.



the action itself seems fairly reminiscent of the fantastic Battle Mode sections of *Super Mario Kart*, we shouldn't have anything to worry about there. Smashing. Mr Tank is currently an unsigned game - it's something of a labour of love for the Rebellion team. No doubt a publisher will be beating a path to their door in the very near future, waving a chequebook and promising free cake and sex and stuff.

Don't say I didn't tell you

Aside from Mr. Tank, Rebellion are also currently working on a couple of Top Secret projects for some rather big names. Unfortunately, I'm not allowed to tell you what, who, when, where, or whither. I can't even give you any clues. All I can say is that they're currently developing a couple of games for *****, one of which is a fast-moving, svga take on ***** and - most exciting of all - they're also working on a technically bang-up-to-date remake of ***** which will be officially tied in with the new ***** movie. Judging by the quality of the ***** models and artwork, not to mention the ***** I managed to sneak a look at while I was there, it should all be pretty ***** smart to say the least.

So that's Rebellion, then. The people who put the erection in insurrection. So to speak. Z

(Left) Cor, just look at all those light-sourcing, texture-mapping, technical stuff thingies.

(Bottom right) What happens if you cross Tank Girl with Princess Diana? Butch bulimia.



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PC ZONE DIARY

MDK Diary

Part 3

Shiny Entertainment continue working on MDK for Interplay. This month, head honcho **Dave Perry** talks to PC Zone about the game...



(Above) The heavens are about to erupt as all hell breaks loose in MDK.

(Above right) Some bloke running away all scared like.

THE NEXT THRILLING EPISODE IN the MDK diaries (Murder He Wrote, or typed to be more accurate). Before I start telling you about all the new stuff for MDK...

Pull up a chair, let's talk about the big picture of making these video game things. For those who think it's easy, consider the impact such a project has on wives, girlfriends or boyfriends.

Now I know that most programmers think that Star Trek is the best thing since sliced bread, the reason is, the guys in the show are portrayed as heroes and occasionally they even get to have sex with alien women. What more could a lowly programmer want out of life? Back in reality land, in March we lured some poor unsuspecting girls into our clutches, wine and dined them a couple of times and then uttered the immortal lines, "MDK needs to be finished, thousands of people are depending on us, see you some time after Christmas."

From that day forward, the stress of making a video game, making it cool, making it on time and having to constantly explain to your chick that

they matter more to you than video games is really damn hard. So I would like to publicly apologise to the spouses of my team members and to say sorry on behalf of all future MDK players. But the game must go on... (Pull yourself together man - Ed.)

Gore 'n' stuff

If we get it right MDK will take pc gaming further than you have ever experienced before. Remember all that hype about the morgue eyes on the Resident Evil box? (Er... no - Ed.) Forget that nonsense, I ordered a whole bunch of 'DEATH' tapes from the dark corners of the Internet, just to do research for MDK. These 'DEATH' tapes show people dying in every possible way (including being blown up) and then show you what they look like afterwards. Video nasty central, truly gruesome stuff. That's the wonderful power of the Internet kids. So for all those wimps who were planning to write distressed letters and complain about MDK, don't bother wasting the trees, just piss off. This game is for adults, and we couldn't care less if you object.

Now, for the gamers who think that we have concentrated too much on violence and death, rest assured. We are having a lot of fun making this game, it's rich in gameplay. There are also a lot of gags. Basically, the magic happens whenever you play a serious game and then see something funny, it's like a sucker punch. It's so much more enjoyable. Too much action sucks, too much humour sucks, the balance is what Shiny are concentrating on.



Last week I showed 50 magazine editors MDK running, I now have many "Quake Killer" quotes and they especially loved the boss in the straightjacket riding the exercise bicycle. (Yep, but I bet they were Americans. But do go on - Ed.)

One really cool feature that we have in the game is the fact that the enemies have eyes. ("So you can shoot them out?" I hear you say) Nah... well, yes, but if an enemy is up high on top of a building and is looking your way when you happen to step out of the shadows, then through our Admiral engine you will be able to see where he is, get him in your sights, and take him out. So, the strategy is to scope out an area, keep out of view, find sentries up high and deal with them. That's why we are giving you what we believe to be the most accurate weapon ever seen in a video game after all.

You read it here first, the secret I promised in my last diary is that we are covertly using a team of 'DEMO' coders to do a special level for MDK. 'DEMO' coders are people who write code for fun or for competition. Due to their passion, they can get a PC to really sing. If you want to see some good example demos (by another team)



(Left) Inside the sleek super spacecraft.

(Right) A giant bastard with large metal claws. How nice.





download the two disks and the patch for *Second Reality* on <http://guru.ami.fi/fc/p-demos.html>

Teams like these who pour their heart and soul into their programming are the best type of people to have working on your game, because they are real gamers, pure and simple. They don't want jobs in our industry and have been known to play a game to completion over 500 times taking turns (now *that* is intense). They just love taking it to the limit.

The final MDK level that they are secretly coding will be kept under wraps, and I'm relying heavily on these guys to pull something very special out of the bag.

Stuff you don't know about

Another level that I haven't talked about is the *Freefall* section. Basically, before you start each city, you must jump out of a spacecraft, fall at the speed of a bullet and land on a moving enemy city. While you are doing this, the city radar sweeps around the screen trying to spot you. Your job is just to avoid the radar and arrive in the city undetected (or else you'll have a welcoming committee). If the radar sees you, then a whole bunch of missiles are launched and then you have to avoid all the missiles and the radar. Now here's the tease, when you jump out of the spacecraft, all your really cool supplies and weapons are also thrown out. As you fall, you can collect these items that are falling with you. However, this makes it *really* hard to avoid the radar, and then the missiles (you get it?). So if you take the easy route and ignore the falling items, they will land all over the city. If you want them, you will have to find them. Basically, for the gamer this is a really nice way to start the level. If



you land well, then you can come in guns blazing. If you cock it up, you'd better make yourself scarce.

The latest thing coded in the game is the bullet view cameras. When you fire a sniper bullet, it flies across the city. Behind it a camera follows and the display on the top of the screen shows its progress (right through the brains of the enemy). The cool part is that you can also pick up homing weapons. If you fire a homing weapon, it too has a camera attached. This means that if an enemy is behind a wall and out of sight, you can watch your bullet chasing him to his death (very satisfying).

Important

The last thing that I want to mention is the projected machine spec. for MDK. Making a game for a high-end machine is always a gamble, but at the same time, we want to push back the boundaries of the new 32-bit console-crushing Pentium PCs. This is our first real effort at developing for the PC and we obviously want our game to look awesome. Having to turn off detail in a game totally sucks, but then doing a game in hi-res allows you to open up whole new avenues of gameplay that just aren't possible in VGA. Now Windows 95 is around and the hardware is finally strong enough to support a detailed, hi-res, real-time 3D action game, we can do what we've always wanted to do, but couldn't because of the hardware limitations.

Other developers may be shouting about the 60fps they're getting from their new *uber-engine*, but at the end of the day what I want is hi-res, detailed graphics. Why? I'll tell you. When you're

(Above left) Jump out of a spacecraft looking like an arse if you must.

(Above) No Rod Stewart jokes, please – this chap's well 'ard so just leave it.

(Below left) Avoid the enemy radar on your way down and pick up as many weapons as possible if you want to survive at ground level.

(Below) Zoom in from miles away to pick off the enemy without him even seeing you. A lot of the game's strategy involves sniping baddies in a certain order so that you can pass through safely. Cool features like this mean that MDK will need a beefy Pentium to handle those gorgeous hi-res graphics.

playing a driving game in hi-res mode it enables you to see farther into the distance.

This enables you to negotiate obstacles better and enjoy playing the game even more. Big pixels mean blocky vision,

and I don't like having my vision blocked. Hi-res also adds detail, so you can make out facial expressions on characters, for example, and see their eyes move in their heads – and this is important. That's why Sega's *Virtua Fighter 3* looks so awesome. The detail in the characters just sucks you in and blows you away. I want to create a similar level of immersion with MDK. I want people to play it and come away saying "Wow!"

The downside to all this is that you'll need a decent Pentium to be able to run our game, but we believe the trade-off is worth it. Most machines nowadays are let down by poor graphics cards that just aren't up to the job. It's just crazy! You buy a P166 and it runs like a 90 because it's got some shitty graphics card stuck in it.

You will need a good Pentium with a fast graphics card (like a Matrox Millennium, for example) to play MDK as it's supposed to be played. This may come as a bit of a shock to some people in Europe, but when you're developing and playing cutting edge software, you've simply gotta have the right tools to do the job. So, if you want to play what we at Shiny believe will be the greatest game ever you'd better start saving for Christmas.

For more information check out: <http://www.shiny.com> Z



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Tomb Raider

Charlie Brooker was recently accused of being a Tomb Raider himself. Well, they didn't quite put it like that in court. No, no, they called him a necrophile. He'd been getting away with it for years, until some rotten twat split on him. Anyway, we bailed him out and invited him to have a look at this whizzy new game from Core Design...



(Above) A spot of bother with some git in a lumberjack shirt.

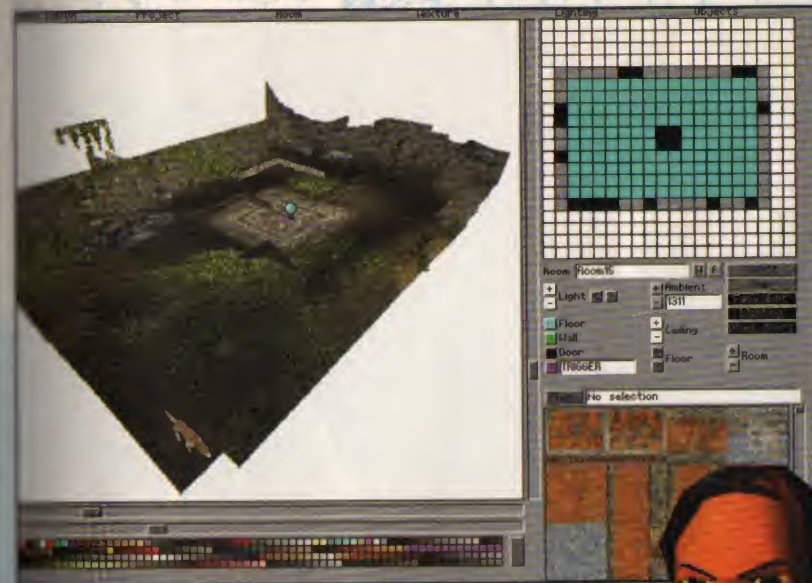
(Left) Girl. Grin. Guns. What a combination.

(Bottom left) This one's for grandma you big bad wolf.

F**KING HELL, THERE. DONE IT. I'VE been dying to use that as an opening line for ages. And now I have. Believe it or not, it's appropriate. The censorious asterisks are going to fly like snowflakes in this paragraph. You see, 'f**king hell' is precisely the phrase that went through my head when I first saw *Tomb Raider* in action. Why? Because it looks f**king amazing, that's why. Really f**king amazing. If this doesn't make your f**king jaw drop, I'll f**king well eat my f**king hat.

Now, before our more uptight readers start writing in to complain ("Dear PC Zone, I must complain in the strongest terms about the language in Charlie Brooker's *Tomb Raider* preview. Please cancel my f**king subscription. Right now."), allow me to defend myself with the following two points: 1) It's only a f**king word (and a short, everyday one at that), and 2) If *Tomb Raider* doesn't make you feel like swearing, there's probably something very wrong with you. So lighten up, will ya!

What I'm trying to say is that it looks absolutely gorgeous. Cast your eyes over the screenshots and you'll no doubt hear yourself thinking something along the lines of "hmm... looks just like *Alone In The Dark* to me". And you'd be more or less right. Until, that is,



you see it in action. Which is when you realise that, unlike the *ATD* games, *Tomb Raider* is 'properly' three-dimensional. Those detailed backdrops aren't backdrops - they're constructed from fully interactive, 3D objects. In fact, the game has more in common with *Mario 64* on the Nintendo 64 than... well, almost any other game you care to mention. That's how impressive it is.

So we meet again, Dr Jones...

Right then. Explanation time. *Tomb Raider* concerns the exploits of one Lara Cruz (or Lara Croft - Core don't seem to have decided which yet) - a sort of a female Indiana Jones. Which isn't to say she's got a large chest and a stubby chin - she does have big tits, but the stubble doesn't get a look in. The promotional artwork makes her look remarkably like Jamie Hewlett's *Tank Girl* - long legs, two guns, and a sneer - while in the game itself she's somewhat reminiscent of Michelle from the *Tekken* series. According to the press bumph Core hurled at me, they chose to use a female lead because "a male playing the game will be more involved with a woman character, in some macho protective little farty way". Hmmm. Anyway, it's probably just as well, because the game looks so involving that playing with Lara Cruz is likely to



be more fun than dealing with a real-life girlfriend (mind you, so is drink-ing paint).

The plot has something to do with a thing called 'The Scion', which - in the finest videogame tradition - has been split into four parts and scattered around the world. And it hasn't been scattered anywhere safe or 'nice', like Center Parcs or Kew Gardens and the like. No no no, that would make a far more sensible, but infinitely duller game. The pieces



Caught in a trap

...I can't walk out. Be-cause I lurve you too much, bay-bee. One thing you won't love is *Tomb Raider*'s extensive collection of booby traps. Cop a feel of some of these. Like, ouch, man...

1. GREAT BIG BALLS

Which, in true Indiana Jones tradition, roll towards you through narrow corridors. Best to dodge out of the way. Unless, of course, you're harbouring a secret desire to see if any goo flies out when a polygon gets squashed.

2. SPIKES

Foolhardy types who find it necessary to run around like a thing possessed may have the wind taken out of their sails by these giant spikes. Impalation nation!

3. SHOOTERAMA

Whoever built these tombs really was a Grade A bastard. There's a variety of 'shooty' traps hidden in the walls, à la *Quake*. From blowdarts to fireballs, the only thing they don't throw at you is custard pies. Because that would be comical. As opposed to deadly and painful.

4. TRAP DOORS

Self-explanatory, really. Just when you least expect it, the ground does a 'Divine Brown' and swallows you.

5. COLLAPSING FLOOR

Another platform game classic, which forces you to time jumps with all the precision of an atomic clock. Look out below.

have ended up in a bunch of dank scary tombs, and it's your job to go in and get them back. Hence the title.

Naturally, the tombs of which I speak are stuffed to bursting with all manner of animals, monsters, and unfriendly humans, not to mention the countless booby traps and puzzles which litter the chambers themselves. And equally naturally, there's an entire arsenal of fearsome weaponry scattered around in there just waiting to be discovered. Pistols and shotguns in excelcis. So far, so *Quake*, you may be thinking. Well stop right there.

Think "Prince Of Persia"

What are you, blind? Weren't you listening? Look at the screenshots. It's a platform game. A polygon-gasmic 3D

(Top left) Here's how they build up the levels. Looks like fun, really. Call that a job? These programmers don't know they're born mate.

(Above) She's a cowboy. On the steel horse she rides. And she's wanted (waaahn-tehehed). Dead or alive.

(Right) Lara comes over all David Wilkie and goes for a swim. Imagine this in motion. Spoooge time.



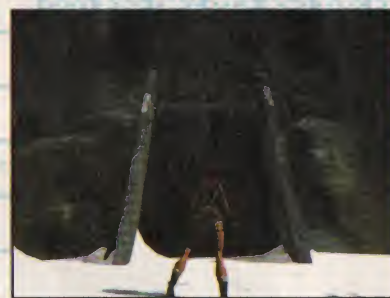
IN
PRODUCTION



(Above) The RSPCA are unlikely to endorse some of Tomb Raider's more violent sections.

(Top left) You're luggage mate!

(Left) Wouldn't want to find yourself inside that, would you? The tomb, I mean.



platform game at that. Lara, the main character, is both wonderfully animated (over 3000 frames in total, fact-fans) and wonderfully gymnastic. She can 'do' all manner of things, from running around gunning down all and sundry like its the climactic scene in a John Woo movie, to 'Bodie and Doyle' style rolls across the floor. Leaping, walking, sprinting, swimming, dangling - she does the lot. An eerily smooth 'roving camera' view ensures that wherever you go, you always get a good eyeful of the action. Even underwater (the swimming sections look excellent). Anyone who's seen or played Mario 64 will probably be struck by the similarity of the format

- although Tomb Raider is no hasty rip-off, since it's been in development for over a year. We're talking proper 3D platform fun, in other words. Core have long been 3D specialists - their Thunderhawk being the only good Mega CD game in existence - and for Tomb Raider they've really pulled out all the stops. The engine hasn't been adapted from any previous titles - it's all been written from scratch.

Having seen the PlayStation and PC versions running side by side,

I'm happy to report that the PC incarnation is the more impressive of the two. Not only does the frame rate remain astonishingly high throughout the game, there's also a hi-res mode which, for once, actually works (as opposed to turning everything into a flick-book affair).

Better yet, Core are also developing a version of the game which supports Direct 3D (the new would-be standard

Product details

Developer: Core Design
Publisher: Eidos Interactive
Telephone: 01332 297797
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: Mid-November

for 3D accelerator cards) - I only got a quick glimpse at it, but the 640x480 resolution, the 64k colour palette, and the 60 frames per second refresh rate ensured that my jaw hung from the base of my head in a manner not entirely dissimilar to the way an elephant's pendulous bollocks dangle between its fat grey legs. Righteous!

Furthermore, 'tis a big game. There may be 'only' four main pyramids, but each is split into three or more 'zones', each of which is basically an entire level in its own right. Core reckon that even if you knew exactly what to do at each point in the game, and got everything right first time, it'd still take you over three hours to complete. So there. The early stages feature fairly 'realistic' monsters, such as wolves and bears, but naturally, the further you progress, the weirder they get. I'm dying to find out just what a "streaky bacon man" (alluded to in the press bump) is.

Tomb Raider is scheduled for release next month. As soon as we can, we'll examine it in further detail and type up a report. Which we'll print. And you'll read. And then we'll all be happy. Okay? **Z**



(Right) Wireframes: Before... and after. All the characters are designed in 3D Studio and then imported into Core's very own animation tool.

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Archimedean Dynasty

As Germany's leading games developer dips its toe into the underwater simulation pool, **Paul Presley** dons his snorkel, flippers and tight-fitting rubber wetsuit to check it out.



I LOVE THE GREAT MURKY DEEP. THERE can be no finer feeling than the ripples of warm liquid covering your body, moistening the skin and soothing the soul. A spiritual cleansing that brings you closer to nature and allows you to appreciate the splendours of the world. It's even better when you add Mr Matey Bubble Bath and pretend your rubber ducky is really a naval attack boat, swimming through foamy fjords and in and out of calf-like mountains until it reaches the elongated, sausage-like enemy submarine full of semen. (You mean SEA-men, surely? - Ed.) Er, of course I do. Sea-men. Cough.

Anyway, the point is that my submersible passion has never really been satisfied by the games community. Sure there are plenty of submarine simulators, dozens of the buggers, but they always seem to concentrate on the strategy side of things or the depiction of life inside a thousand-ton metal tube. What I want to see is single-seat fighter ships battling it out with divers, sharks and plankton. MicroProse nearly scored a hit with *Subwar 2050* a while back, but since then there's been nothing comparable to make any waves.

Archie who?

So thank Chegwin for the Germans, say I. Blue Byte, the producers of such classic fare as *The Settlers* and, er, *The*



Settlers 2, have swam to my rescue with *Archimedean Dynasty*. (One more 'watery' pun and you're fired - Ed.) Taking the basic framework of *Subwar 2050*, mixing it with a little bit of the *Wing Commander* formula and then generally bumping up the presentation (although not by using *Wing IV*-style FMV. I'm talking about the in-game graphics which I'll come to in a minute). *Archimedean Dynasty* puts you in the role of a futuristic underwater mercenary - a sort of Jacques Cousteau with guns and an attitude - trying to make a living by working for the mining corporations, the navy or by just going rogue and becoming a proper pirate, a-lootin' and a-pillagin', splicing the mainbrace and avasting your hearties. Oh, and by killing everything that poses a threat.

Under the sea...

Despite this being a Blueprint and so by its nature being ever so slightly gushy and fawning, I do have to say that *Archimedean Dynasty* looks bloody amazing. While the world and his grandad are doing double flips over

Product details

Developer: Blue Byte
Publisher: Blue Byte
Telephone: 01604 232200
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: November

BRender, Blue Byte have developed their very own 3D engine which on the face of things looks to be just as good. The demo I was shown was certainly moving some pretty impressive (and large) texture-mapped polygons about the screen at a fair old rate, even in SVGA and under Windows 95. Plus the landscapes were very impressive, almost on a par with the advanced Voxel Space 2 technology that Novalogic have been working on.

Anyway, *Archimedean Dynasty* is due out in a month or two and we'll see just how well it compares to Bullfrog's forthcoming *Creation* and all the others then. For now I'll just have to keep playing with the rubber duck. **Z**

(Above) Bizarre-looking ships abound. Some are absolutely huge. Remember those cargo freighters in *Elite II*? These are even bigger. And armed.

(Below right) Bruce Willis films an action scene from the next *Die Hard* movie.

Blue Byte's 'Submarine' Presentation Studio

To help promote *Archimedean Dynasty* to all of us hard-bitten, cynical and world-weary games journos, Blue Byte have put together a rather unique presentation studio for the game. Resembling the interior of a futuristic submarine - complete with command console and fish swimming around the outside of the cockpit - the hapless investigative reporter is forced to don a Chemical Protection Suit and is thrust into a strange-looking elevator that descends into the depths of hell (or so it seemed). From there you are ushered onto the main deck, given a strange blue cocktail (that tasted suspiciously like bitter lemon but under the ultraviolet lights glowed like it had been mixed in a uranium reactor) and treated to the game proper. Not only did it confirm my worst fears about the Germans (that they're as weird as the French) but I also got to keep the suit. Smart! Even if I did have a bit of trouble explaining what it was at the customs desk in Düsseldorf.



Little Johnny was enjoying the sedate pace of his new lift to school, when...



Charlie Brooker once spent an entire year trapped in a claustrophobic environment packed to bursting point with violent aggressors. That was the Doddington Estate in Battersea. This is *Robotron X*. And hey, what's the difference?

Robotron X

Product details

Developer: Player One/Williams
Publisher: Williams/GT Interactive
Telephone: 0171-258 3791
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: October



EARLY VIDEO GAMES WERE ALMOST completely psychotic. Swift, brutal expeditions into abstract worlds of pain. Worlds in which survival depended solely upon your ability to annihilate endless waves of attackers. Worlds in which a cacophony of laser-fire and electronic carnage rang continually in your ears, while blocky explosions of flowering death spat primary colours in your eye. They may have been almost entirely bloodless, but by God, the violence flowed.

Robotron 2084 being a case in point. In case you don't remember it, allow me to explain. It's the future, right, and mankind is being wiped out by the Robotrons – a seemingly invincible army of circuit-driven sociopaths. Why? Why do you think, dunderhead? Like any self-respecting sci-fi computer-technology oojamaflop, the Robotrons have done a little calculating in their

(Above) Now it's all made up of polygons you can switch to different views and get closer to the action.

(Above right) The original arcade game used two joysticks: one to control direction of movement and one to aim and fire. Williams have got round this by using the four buttons on a gamepad as well as the directional pad.

(Below and right) It may look different, but the gameplay is basically the same. In other words, this game will be fab!



spare time and decided that their creators (ie us) are, to be frank, a bunch of shits who deserve nothing less than immediate extermination. Apparently they'd formed this startling analogy during an afternoon spent in a pub with two MFL area managers, three second-year students, and Ian McShane. Anyway, they're gunning us down like dogs – like dogs, goddammit!

Fear not, help is at hand. In the shape of you (yes, you). Because, for reasons which don't really deserve explanation, only you (yes, you) can save us. Armed with a single laser gun, your task is to enter a succession of battlegrounds (all of them – spookily – the same size as a monitor screen), kill every single Robotron in sight, and simultaneously rescue defenceless humans from the surrounding mayhem. This isn't very easy, since A) There's loads of them, and B) There's only one of you.

Luckily, you're blessed with the ability to run in one direction, while shooting in another. Starting to sound familiar? Yes, that's right. It's just like *Smash TV*, or *Loaded* on the PlayStation – a top-down view, claustrophobic, paranoid blast 'em up. Except, since it's older than either of those two games, it's got really basic sound effects, and even more basic graphics.

Aha – or has it?

Not any more it doesn't

Nope, not any more. Because GT are limbering up for the release of *Robotron X*, a '90s update of the classic Williams arcade original. As befits today's modern PC games, it features fast-moving 3D polygons, texture maps, fancy explosions and loads of spangly sound effects. But – and here's the good bit – the gameplay is exactly the same as it was before. Which means simple, effective, cathartic blasting. At the speed of light. Raaa.

Snobby arcade purists should welcome this with loving arms too,



since despite the hi-tech facelift, the developers have – quite incredibly – managed to retain the look and feel of the original. The result is something that is instantly recognisable as being *Robotron*, only more so. If you see what I mean. All the robots, the humans, and the main character – they're three-dimensional polygons. The top-down view is replaced by a roving 'camera' viewpoint, which hovers somewhere above, zooming and tilting as the action befits. You know the movie *Tron*? Well, they'd done a *Robotron* sequence in that it would have looked like this. Okay?

The original arcade game was distinguished by an unusual control system: two joysticks. One for running, one for shooting. To emulate this effectively on the PC, you should ideally use a four-button gamepad – the fire buttons simply serve as a second 'joystick' bit, allowing you to experience the joys of multi-directional firepower. This set-up was utilised to great effect in the Super Nintendo version of *Smash TV* and I see no reason why it shouldn't work just as well here.

So there you have it: *Robotron X*. It's just like the original, only different. Hopefully this is the first in a series of old arcade updates. Whatever happens while this 'retro gaming' vibe is in the air, it's just what the doctor ordered. Keep 'em peeled for a full review. **Z**



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EIDOS
INTERACTIVE

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CORE

Guts 'N' Garters

While every other developer is frantically going bonkers trying to compete with ID's latest, newcomers Magic Canvas have turned their backs on the first-person perspective and plumped for a two-player, high-res, all action/adventure style format. **Jeremy Wells** went to see why.

DESPITE BEING NEW TO GAMES, Magic Canvas have taken a very structured and organised approach to games development. This could be something to do with the fact that they've done a lot of work for the Inland Revenue and have also worked closely with various tourist offices and touch screen technology. As a result, they've got a lot of experience working to a tight brief and this has helped the company approach the on-going development in a very methodical way. The developers have done their research, they know what gamers want, they know what sells and they know exactly how they're going to do it. It's all very calculated and very well thought through. Publishers Ocean obviously share their commitment, as they've given them the go-ahead to start working on a sequel to *Guts 'N' Garters* already, and the first game ain't even finished yet.

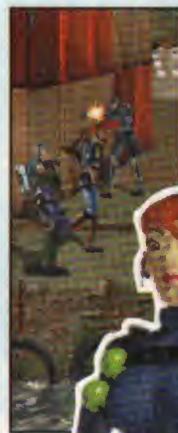
Que Genre?

Guts is a one or two-player adventure-cum-shoot 'em up that's packed with puzzle elements, weapons, characters and numerous different backdrops and settings. The player can opt to play as either Guts, a hardened commando type and a ruthless killer, who believes that might is always right, or Garters, a

tough and resourceful mercenary babe who specialises in hi-tech computer systems, surveillance and investigation. Both the lead characters and all of the baddies (there are over 100 of them) are very detailed sprites and use motion capture (that was bought in) to help them move more realistically.

Detail, lovely detail

The first thing that strikes you when you see *Guts 'N' Garters* running is the level of detail throughout. Every character and object features 'intelligent' shadowing, and scales accurately. Each of the background



(Above) The attention to detail in both the characters and the backgrounds is quite awesome.

(Left) Because each scene is made up of numerous layers, characters and vehicles can move in and out of the screen to give a greater sense of depth and involvement.

scenes (and there are over 100 of them) were designed using a layered system, bit like onion peel, so that the characters on screen look like they're actually running around, behind, on top of and even inside (thanks to a clever cut-away system) the rich graphical environment. Each backdrop also features some rather nice animations: at the dock the sea shimmers in the sunshine, in the industrial quarter, smoke puffs from the chimneys etc. It's also possible for the player to let rip at objects and buildings and watch them disintegrate (or explode if their weapon is powerful enough). In other words, considering that it's essentially a free-roaming environment, the level of immersion is something that the numerous artists (over half the team incidentally) and the programming team should be very happy with. The trade-off with so much detail is that due to memory problems *Guts* is flick-screen only, although the team is convinced the sequel will be side-scrolling. At present, as far as gameplay is concerned, this doesn't really affect how the game is played, although when the character you're controlling dashes to the back of the screen you can't help feeling a little isolated from the action. A zoom feature would be nice, but then you'd start to get serious memory problems and the two-player mode would get very confusing. As it stands, the team are currently putting in the missions and working on the puzzles and gameplay. If they can manage to keep the level of detail and depth they've applied to the graphics and storyline in the rest of the game, and sort out a reasonably efficient targeting system, *Guts* could well be the first in a series of innovative and keenly detailed action/adventure games. We'll wait and see. **Z**

Product details

Developer: Magic Canvas

Publisher: Ocean

Telephone: 0161 832 6633

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: November

Unlike some stand up comedians.... *Mutant* penguins don't need gimmicks



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IN PRODUCTION FIFA Soccer 97

Christmas is coming, and the kids are getting fat. Largely because they spend all their time indoors playing simulations of sport, instead of going out and doing the real thing. **Patrick McCarthy** should know – he's put on 30 pounds himself.

YES, IT'S COMING UP TO CHRISTMAS, a time of year that's full of so many lovely traditions: wrapping presents under the tree, searching for a sprig of mistletoe to tuck up on the waistband of your jeans, and checking out EA's annual catalogue of their phenomenally successful sports titles: there'll be a disk here, an engine re-write there, and a new feature somewhere else usually down toward the front where everyone can see it). So FIFA 97's here. What's new? What's not? And why on earth am I asking you, when I have the facts right in front of me?

Motion Blending

Motion Blending sounds like something that goes on in the head of a coprophiliac. But it isn't. It's a lot more wholesome, and probably a bit more technical (slightly, anyway). In the average motion-captured sports scene, people (sometimes famous, sometimes nonentities) are filmed through the motions (if you'll forgive the further coprophiliac overtones) of the appropriate sport. Ping-pong balls stuck on the key joints of their body. The ping-pong ball movements are used for the subsequent animations that appear in the game. Everyone knows this.

Everyone also knows that the subsequent animations in the game appear as separate animations – because that's how they were recorded. They are put together about as well as the average Punt and Dennis routine: a player runs along the pitch using his 'running' animation. You give him the ball. He pauses slightly, his limbs snapping into another position. He goes into his 'trapping the ball' animation. You want him to shoot. You press the button. He pauses again,

(Right) Check out all that glorious detail. Let's hope it moves faster than Tony Adams.

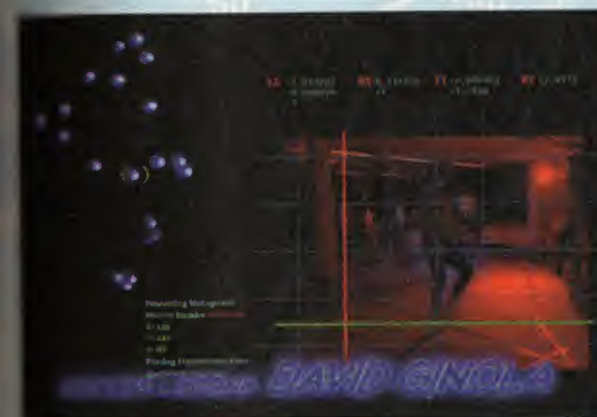
(Below) To make sure the players move in the right way, EA Sports motion-captured David Ginola. They'll also be using him and Lee Dixon in their new beat 'em up.

loads his 'shooting' animation, pulls back a beautifully sculpted foot... and the computer, or your opponent, takes the ball off his toe. His arms and legs snap into another running animation, and off you go again. Motion Blending is an attempt to get around this, by smoothing off the bits between the various animations, so that the transition is less noticeable, the game more fluid – and the action less ludicrous in slow-motion replays.

On top of this, the new 3D Plus feature allows greater smoothing of the player figures, so they look more like they have proper muscles, and less like they've been put together from a Meccano set.

An all-star line-up

EA's sports titles, always beautifully put together, get more like a television show with each release. Where previous versions of FIFA had John Motson providing the commentary, FIFA 97 has pushed the boat out on the overpaid expert front. Mottie's been joined by the housewife's favourite moustachioed smoothie, the grey-haired Magnum P.I. himself, Des Lynam. And they've poached Andy Gray from Striker – which... er, is a bit like going all out for Jason Lee. However, EA seem confident that, with a better script, he'll be more polished than he was in the other sorry effort. Time will tell.





(Right) The all new FIFA 97 will feature an enhanced A/I system that's more intelligent than most 3rd Division players.

(Below) Hopefully the keepers will be better than they were last time.



league you're playing, so that other people can set up their own superteams and get silly as well. Other enhancements on the managerial side include the option to fine-tune your team's formations, and on the gameplay front there's a new indoor option, for 3, 5, and 7-a-side action.

Difficulty levels

You may well need to do it, too, because they've made the game a lot more

difficult. Apparently people complained that the last one was too easy if you really practiced. They may have a point

(Below) The latest incarnation will feature all the usual viewing options and a 20-player network option. Handy.



As if an all-star commentary wasn't enough, they've also got the very lovely David Ginola in to perform all the movements for the motion capturing. So don't be surprised if players keep stopping to see to their hair and only change their underwear once a week.

Managerial Action

One of the more irritating things about the last version of FIFA was that the club sides weren't that well-researched. Players were in the wrong positions, and you had to move them about. But any changes you made would be ignored when you started the next game, and you had to go through it all again every time: Pain In The Arseville. This time, your changes within the side will not only be saved, but any changes you make to the squad will be too.

You can swap players from different teams - or just take them for yourself without trading - setting your own little superteam. How d'you fancy getting George Weah, Ronaldo, Matthias Sammer and Youri Djorkaeff for your sorry-ass no-hopers? For nothing? Strictly speaking this isn't management - it's grand larceny. But you can do it. And you'll be able to set up a database for every saved



- someone not a million miles away from where I'm sitting at the moment won the League with Chelsea Chelsea! This is the Chelsea in the days before Ravishing Ruud and Luscious Luca, too. Another chap claimed that he could score every time from the kick off within around eight seconds with Arsenal (!?) The word is that in the new version, the computer is "almost impossible to beat." Bad news for dilettantes, who just want a casual game now and then, of course, and can't be bothered to take the touch-typing course necessary to master the arcane skills and what amount to special moves of the game. But good news for obsessives and experts, who, I suppose, are more likely to keep on buying these new versions.

Big numbers theory

The other new feature that may ensure that this year's model does extremely well is the network option. We're not talking here about measly old four, or even eight-player, action. We're talking about 20 players. That's one for every outfield player, in case your maths is a bit weak, and it's been promised before by other games, but this time it's a reality. Which means you'll all have to stand against the wall in the office and be 'picked' by two captains, and possibly suffer the childhood humiliation of being the last one left all over again. Still, cheer up - at least they can't put you in goal. **Z**

Product details

Developer: EA Sports Canada

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Telephone: 01753 549442

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: November 1996

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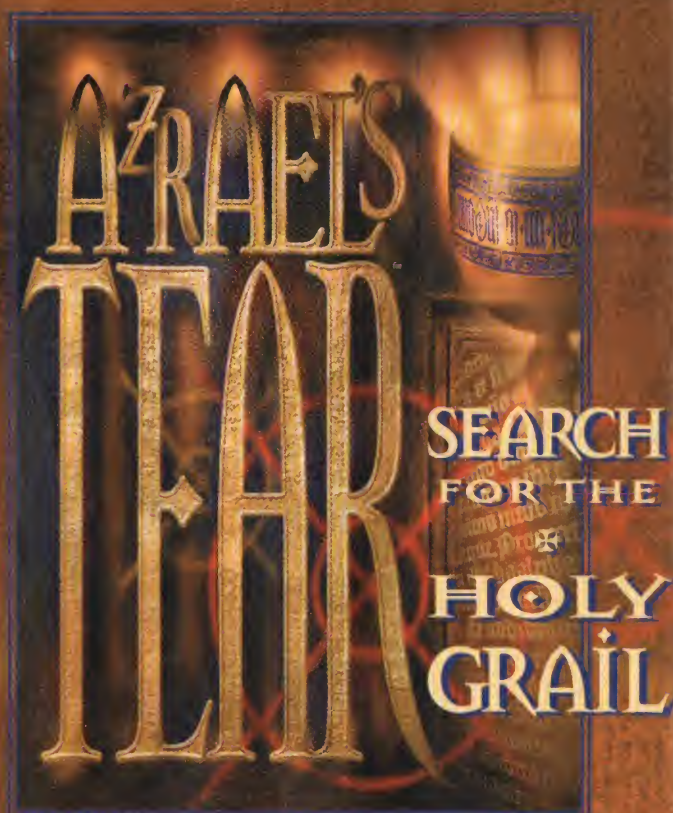
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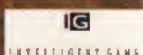
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Fragile Allegiance

Former marriage guidance counsellor to Charles and Di, Bosnian UN peace-keeper and Ambassador to Iraq, **Paul Mallinson** seems the perfect candidate for a spot of intergalactic diplomacy.



(Left) Building an off-world space station is a priority if you're looking to establish trading routes with others.

(Above) But first you'll have to buy the plans from the big boys at Tetra Corp, the huge company backing your mining venture.

(Bottom centre) After collating an impressive number of weapons, I decide to launch them at the weakest race of aliens. Fair?

which your colony operates, which affects the amount of money you make. Naturally *Fragile Allegiance* has all of the above, but what exactly can we expect from the final version? What has Gremlin's game got that all the others haven't?

Out with a bang

For starters, the presentation of the game is already looking top notch. Rather than having to contend with a huge amount of pop-up windows, a single display window, with smart metallic sliding panels is the preferred method of navigation. Very *Terminator 2*, and classy with it.

LIKE A PORN STAR DRAINED OF ALL energy after a particularly demanding 'take', the planet we live on and in is being sucked dry by over-mining and day-to-day usage. Our planetary resources are going to last for ever are they? Not according to *Fragile Allegiance*, or other resource management-based games of a similar ilk. Mineral deposits, essential for industrial manufacturing of all kinds will have to be sought elsewhere.

Most, *Ascendancy*, *Deadlock* and *Fragile Allegiance's* predecessor on the Amiga, K240, had the player drilling holes on secure, remote planets in the vain hope of finding the necessary materials to colonise them. What we have, with this futuristic resource management game, is a fair estimation of what will

eventually happen if we're not careful with the resources we currently have at our disposal.

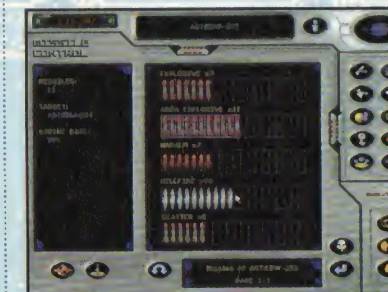
We're alright jack

But, ultimately, no one really gives a toss because none of us are going to be around when the shit hits the wall behind the fan (because the fan's been recycled for its metal), and, for now, I'm happy to explore new worlds to

suck them dry too.

Like many of its contemporaries,

Fragile Allegiance relies heavily on a seemingly complex system of menus, maps and statistic screens. It's what this genre's all about; exploration, mining, manufacture, research, defence, and, if you're lucky, a sprinkling of mass destruction. Success, as always, is directly related to the efficiency at



My God, it's full of stars

Apart from yourself, there are six other alien races out there - all with their own characteristics and ambitions. And, like yourself, they want to rule the universe - either with, or without your help. The preview version we were shown was quite literally 'nails'. The AI had been cranked up to 'hellish', with the alien rivals just itching for some action.



Say hi to the PC Zone team: Wag, Jez, Tim, Amaya and Spike.



From the moment the landing craft touches the surface of the first asteroid, it's a race against time to establish a stable 'core' operation, before branching out to other planets, or even going on the offensive with the six other alien civilisations that have been incorporated to make things trickier. Each has its own characteristics and ambitions – some extending an arm of friendship (and, possibly, a shot at partnership) while others want nothing but to rape and pillage your colony for their own needs.

Dealing with antagonists will be fun as there are numerous weapons to try out on them. Nukes, biological weapons (highly illegal, but handy if you intend to wipe out all life on a planet but prefer to leave the buildings intact) and an innovative little doobrie called a Stasis Bomb which is said to be useful if used on your own colony. What it does you see, is freeze time within a set range, holding people, ships and even dust, in temporary stasis until the effect times out. Use it on

(Above) Send out secret agents to sabotage the opposition. Ooh, I love it when the fighting gets dirty.

(Above right) Caught in a crossfire. This colony isn't very big and will soon be kneeling in my presence.



(Below) Asteroid engines are great for a spot of zero gravity joy-riding. Power steering, electric windows and bottomless ashtray optional.



yourself if you're under attack and it also freezes attacking enemy forces, allowing precious time for a reinforcements call.

Advanced AI will provoke a different reaction from the aliens every time you play; difficulty levels will be user-definable, allowing you to change alien aggressiveness, frequency of random events, length of the player's contract and number of asteroids to chip away at etc (or so Gremlin hope). Good news for newcomers to the genre.

Off yer tits

To make it even more interesting there will be a number of 'underworld' features that are definitely guaranteed to liven things up a bit. Black market trading of illegal substances, including recreational and performance-enhancing drugs is risqué, but realistic (sounds not unlike *Outland* to me). The odd 'house of entertainment' boosts colonist's morale (well, wouldn't it boost yours?) which will be important if overall performance is to stay high.

It's a tricky business keeping all of the people happy all of the time, especially when you consider how deep this kind of game can become. Rather thoughtfully, Gremlin's developers are building into the game Artificial Intelligence routines that manage parts of your colony for you, freeing up time for more important matters, such as moon golf and astro tennis... erm, I mean mining and research.

For those of you who like nothing better than humiliating your friends

Product details

Developer: Gremlin Interactive

Publisher: Gremlin Interactive

Telephone: 01142 753 423

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: November



and colleagues with your gaming skills a smorgasbord of network and link-up options are to be included. Up to eight players, each representing a different mining company, will get the chance to play against/with each other, with an internal e-mail system for general abuse and communication.

So it sounds like we're going to be in for an extremely absorbing and entertaining time. *Fragile Allegiance* is not far off finished – only a few sound effects have yet to be incorporated, and the AI is being pruned into shape as we speak. Next month we'll be reviewing it in full, so get the weights out and get into training – this could be a heavy one. **Z**

Grinning Evil Death

Of course, interplanetary destruction plays a major part in *Fragile Allegiance* which, if you're prone to bed-wetting or daisy-picking, may not be your cup of tea. Whether a collection of these goodies will act as a deterrent to other players remains to be seen. But then again, what's the point of spending loads of money on these things if you're not prepared to use them?



MEGA MISSILE

This weapon rains ice creams down on the unsuspecting aliens. Available in a variety of different flavours. Maybe.



NUCLEAR MISSILE

The ultimate means to an end. Make sure your colonists stand well back once the blue touch paper is lit. Probably.



STASIS BOMB

Makes time stand still. Similar in effect to a Wet Wet Wet gig, except without the makeup. I think.



VIRUS

Dropping this baby causes the enemy to go blind in one eye and renders them sterile. So a man down the pub told me.



ANTI-VIRUS

Opposite of the above number, restores sight (in one eye only) and turns the colonists into sexual athletes. Apparently.

Shhhh! He really thinks he's playing tennis...



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Patrick McCarthy thought *Comanche 3* was a courtroom RPG based upon the wrongful imprisonment of a party of Native Americans during the mid-19th century. It's just another of those hilarious misunderstandings that make life in our office like a non-stop sitcom.

Comanche 3

Product details

Developer: Novalogic
Publisher: Novalogic
Telephone: 0171-405 1777
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: December

WHEN IT COMES TO HELICOPTER sims, there are two types of punter. On the one hand there are the people who like full-on simulations, which offer operating conditions as close as it's possible to get to reality on a PC. There they sit, in their vibrating swivel chairs, wearing their special G-Force Emulator Vests over their RAF-issue sweaters, wiggling five 25-button joysticks, three weapons-control systems and nine different foot pedals, with a realistic winch bolted to the radiator and their specially-installed sliding bedroom door wide open. They don't care that the game they're playing looks like it was designed for the Game And Watch, because the flight model is so accurate that ordinary people can't even get the thing off the ground. They don't call helicopters 'choppers', because that's too common - everyone, even people who can't fly the real thing, calls them

(Right) Helicopter pilots like to attach pointy sticks to their machines and write their names in the sand.



(Below) "Okay, then... race you to the top of the hill and back."

(Below right) Kevin wasn't sure whether they'd landed with the wheels up, or whether it was just perspective.

that. These people have their own, more exclusive private slang names for them. Unfortunately, I can't tell you what they are. I can't remember. I saw them written down once, but I've got a memory like a lap-dancer's underwear. Anyway, these sort of people tend to gravitate towards games like *Hind*.

Then there are the other sort, who enjoy helicopter sims for some perverse reason of their own - perhaps they like looking through bedroom windows, or something. Or maybe they just enjoy flying about more slowly than they can in a plane, and don't want all that bother with differentials and stuff. All I

know is that if you gave them a helicopter sim with a decent flight model they'd a) struggle to get off the ground, b) if they did get off the ground, they wouldn't be able to travel forwards; and c) if they did manage to travel forwards they'd also travel downwards so fast their testicles would be peeping out the neck of their flying suit. Seconds later, they'd be little more than one of the minor contents of an interesting new soup: Ena Baxter's Twisted Metal and Flambéd Flyboy Bisque.

These sort of people like games like *Comanche*, or its follow-up, *Comanche Vs Werewolf*. They want fast action and



movement. They want ease of control. And equally importantly, they want a game that doesn't look like a preliminary sketch for an electronic British Rail Passenger Information Board.

Dark! Wha-?

There was no danger of *Comanche* ever being mistaken for one of the purists' flight sims. Flying it was a simple up, down, left and right affair. And even the first version, however many years ago that was, still looks pretty damned good today. Purists' flight sims don't look that good even now. And as for this version... I know it's probably one of the most over-used phrases in the history of preview-writing.

But the graphics really are superb. No, really. We mean it this time. The big difference is that with this version, for the first time, you can have a realistic flight difficulty setting. You can have your cake and eat it. (Except that phrase doesn't make sense.) If you want an easy time of it, a old-fashioned, arcade *Comanche* style, you can. But if you want to don your RAF sweater and struggle along - there's the patches for your elbows and shoulders: off you go.

Did anyone ever tell you you're rather attractive?

The game is powered by Voxel Space 2, a terrain imaging system which gives you a landscape so pretty that you almost don't want to go home

afterwards. (Unless you live in Gstaad, I suppose - in which case, d'you fancy a bit of house-swapping?) Look at those gorgeous contours, that lustrous plant-life. It almost seems a shame to fly over it and turn it into a twisted, smoking mess with the entire contents

of a munitions factory. The detail on the helicopter itself also has to be seen to be believed. The lighting conditions reflect off the surfaces of the windscreens (or whatever helicopters have) when the light's straight on them, and let you see right through the cabin when it isn't. Zoom right in close and you can see the heads of the two blokes flying the thing. You'll see that they're looking around - their heads are moving, for goodness' sake. You can even see that they're wearing goggles and helmets, that one of them had chickenpox as a child and that the other one needs a shave and suffers from unsightly nasal hair. Every now and then the one who sits at the back doing nothing, picks his nose and wipes it under his seat,



(Above) "Isn't this nice," said Timmy, "we look like a great big buzzy fly."

(Above left) Helicopter toilets flush straight onto the ground.

and the one in front turns round to tell him off. You see we're talking detailed, here.

So whaddya got?

Since this is the third version of the game, you'll know all that stuff by now about how the *Comanche* is supposed to be the world's most "survivable" combat helicopter. Let's face it, if Americans are going to fly it, it needs to be.

And if you're going to fly it, who cares? That's what saved games are for. As for the differences between this and previous versions,

there's the obvious point that this version is going to look even more fabbo than its predecessors. There's the difficulty settings and the missions - all 30 of them. There will be day missions in beautifully-appointed landscapes; attractive weather conditions; and night missions, in which everything will go green. There'll be translucent smoke billowing from the back of the allied trucks you've taken out in true American style. And thanks to the new Dolby Surround sound effects, there'll be more talking going on around you than when you accidentally end up as the only male in a girls' night out. And you'll probably have about as much chance of understanding it. Look out for a full review next issue. Z

(Above) Unable to stand the tension any longer, both crew members nodded off.

(Below) Lots of full-frontal shots of nude helicopters.



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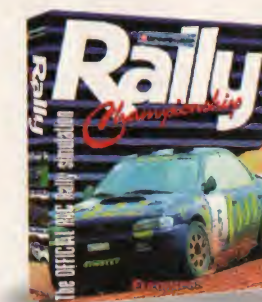


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Do you
qualify?



When he first saw the title of this game, **Paul Mallinson** thought he'd been given directions to a house owned by the mystical Smurf family. Much to his chagrin, this turned out not to be the case.

M1A2 Abrams



IN
PRODUCTION



Product details

Developer: Charybdis Enterprises
Publisher: Interactive Magic
Telephone: 01344 409 399
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: November

(Above) Whether there will be any ground forces to mow down with this thing is, as yet, undecided.

(Above right) Bosnia, Ukraine or Iran? Or maybe training in Texas?

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, BUT I'VE actually driven a real tank. A Russian T-34 (I think) on a test track with a bunch of other... up journalists. It gave me a taste of what it must've been like to pilot one of those marvellous machines in the heat of combat. Initially it was pretty scary tearing down an undulating... primarily because I couldn't see where the hell I was going and steering the mutha was no easy task. But eventually I got the hang of it and was soon tearing up the turf like a... possessed. I have to say it was... primordial fun.

Now you can actually see where you're going

All I could think of sat in the T-34 was, "how the hell could anyone fight a battle in this thing?". The answer to that question was; they don't have to anymore. These days tank technology has advanced to the point where the driver doesn't have to squint out of a poxy hatch at the front of the vehicle.

The M1 Abrams series, with its sophisticated integrated navigation and targeting systems, astounding 'fightability' and high level of armour protection brought tank warfare into the 21st Century when first introduced way back in 1979.

Interactive Magic's newbie M1A2 Abrams (subtitled 'America's Main Battle Tank', but let's forget that because it's a crap subtitle) aims to simulate everything the real tank can do in real life, which means wholesale destruction on a large scale, all 'wholesale-destruction-on-a-large-scale' fans.

Spread over a number of combat theatres (Bosnia, the Balkans, the Persian Gulf and Ukraine/Russia), each with its own unique terrain, enemy forces and military situation, M1A2 Abrams is beginning to take shape in a polygonal form, with the usual variety

of views from within the tank itself and an astounding array of 'digital battlefield' map displays.

So far, gameplay is quite basic, but the final version aims to incorporate complex campaign scenarios complete with vehicles, artillery and helicopter support, which sounds pretty cool.

Hopefully, M1A2 Abrams, when finished, will provide tank fans with a claustrophobic, exciting and atmospheric experience. All will be revealed in a full review next issue. **Z**

I'm a warrior!

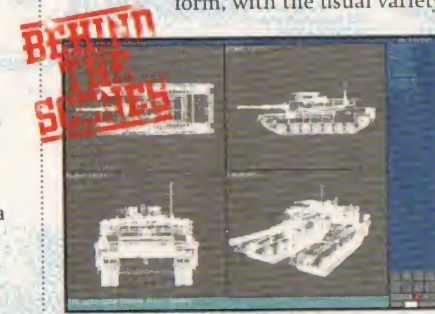
Some of you on-line-sters out there may have spent many an hour fighting through the skies of *Air Warrior* (a multi-player combat sim that's been around since 1987), in the vain hope of racking up a few kills which was notoriously difficult to achieve (life expectancy of novice players being akin to that of a Mayfly).

The follow-up, *Air Warrior II*, also from Interactive Magic, is a welcome solution to those 'I'm shit at *Air Warrior*' blues by being an outstandingly enhanced, single-player version of the on-line game, allowing at least some practice before the eventuality of death. Twenty-five historic aircraft are touted, as well as over one hundred missions spanning three separate eras (WWI, WWII and the Korean War). I-Magic claims that the AI and flight models will wow any self-respecting propeller-head into paroxysms of ecstasy, but, for us, the final verdict will remain open until we get our hands on the finished thing, which should also appear in our next issue.



(Left) Big tank - brewing up! Chances of survival? Zero.

(Right) Here's an unfinished tank. It's a good job they're not like this in the game, otherwise you'd fall through the thing.

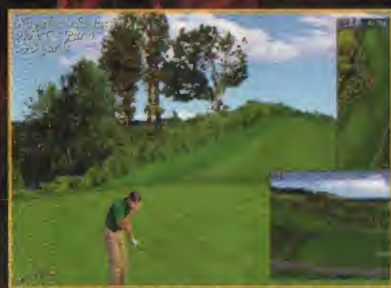


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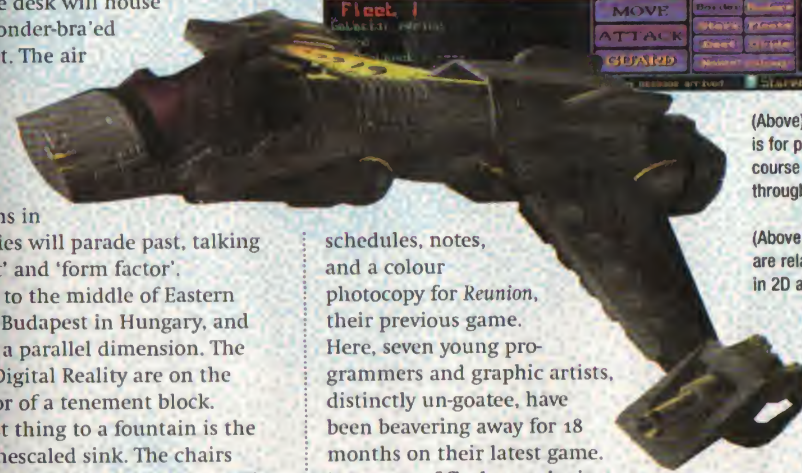
Imperium Galactica

And so to Hungary, where the software companies are refreshingly down to earth and the women are 'mondo schwing'. David McCandless visits GT Interactive's latest crew - Digital Reality - to nod meaningfully at a forthcoming space 'em up - Imperium Galactica.

STEP INTO ANY MAJOR development house or software company and you will find yourself in a room. The ceilings and walls will be flecked with fake marble and a fountain will chuckle lazily in the corner. Squeazy purple curtains will absorb and cuddle your backside as you fold into them. Roman pillars will prop up a distressed, gothic ceiling. A titanic granite desk will house a tawny wonder-bra'ed receptionist. The air will smell subtly septic, subtly perfumed.

Mannequins in business suits and ties will parade past, talking of 'product' and 'form factor'. A red carpet will lead you to the middle of Eastern Europe, to Budapest in Hungary, and you will find a parallel dimension. The offices of Digital Reality are on the fourth floor of a tenement block. The nearest thing to a fountain is the slightly limescaled sink. The chairs wouldn't look out of place at a school assembly. The ceiling is low and cracked. The furnishings are post-communist chic. The walls are dotted with

schedules, notes, and a colour photocopy for Reunion, their previous game. Here, seven young programmers and graphic artists, distinctly un-goatee, have been beaver away for 18 months on their latest game. In an age of flashy marketing and fake-granite reception desks, here is an oasis, which smacks of the 'olden days', when talented home grown



(Above) The StarMap is for plotting the course of your Empire through the stars.

(Above right) Battles are relayed to you in 2D and 3D chunks.



(Left) The bridge of your ship - the epi-centre, the hub.

(Below) Gabor Feher - Digital Reality's main man, and thoroughly nice guy.

(Below right) The Digital Reality team. Average age: 23.



programmers slaved away at their mum's house, creating labours of love while milk went off around them. The labour of love here is Imperium Galactica - an extraordinary merging of Command & Conquer, Sim City, Wing Commander IV, Star Control II, and Blade Runner.

The future

Like all good sci-fi yarns, the Imperium Galactica future has that most special of species - man - conquering the speed of light and venturing daintily into the ether. The void. The great, black unknown. In essence, space. Earth has become a rather crammed veal truck, forcing explorers, colonists, and new age wayfarers to explore the cosmos, appropriating new worlds and building all manner of swanky architecture. As we all know, with exploration comes contact with other species - some nice, some not. To police the border and protect colonies, the Earth Empire has created a military force of some size, made up of multiple fleets, each with multiple cruisers, scouts and warships. You, a lowly captain at the start of the story, command one of the lesser fleets and, like all powermad crazies, it is your quest to build an entire empire.

The game is split roughly into three sub-games with you at the centre. The pivotal location is your ship. Here, in various rooms, you receive and filter e-mail, consult your star charts, and





(Left) More scary battle drama.



(Right) Develop your planetary systems with Geiger-esque buildings.

arrange and plan your ships for combat. Orders from your superiors come through constantly, as do requests for help (from fraught colonists or ambushed fleets) and personal video messages from your wife. In the R&D facility, you can set about converting your wealth and resources into quality weaponry and spaceships – keeping your eye on taxes and setting up trades with one of the 100 planets specialising in different technologies. To cap it all off, there's also a bar location in the bowels of your vessel, where you can interact with your crew and gain vital gossip from visiting dignitaries.

While you're hob-nobbing with the plot, two other sub-games demand your attention. One is the *SimCity*-esque colony management where you build and populate the fledgling planets of your Empire. Careful attention needs to be paid to your choice of infrastructure. 42 buildings can be constructed, ranging from police stations and solar plants to bars and sports stadiums. As your population and city grows it can be tuned to provide essential resources and

weaponry for your fleet. Careful though, over-taxation or a laissez-faire attitude can leave your metropolis open to unrest – either from revolt or from an enemy empire lancing your life's work with ground troops. Only a *Command & Conquer*-style troops sim will save you at this point, although you can call in air support from your fleet.

Super space combat

Should your ships be intercepted, then a space combat sim kicks in. Similar in point and click approach to the ground battles, you commandeer individual ships in your armada, co-ordinating laser fire, kamikazee scouts, and evasive action in real-time. If you've stocked up on lasers, bombs, mines, and hyper-drives, you should slice through enemy battalions like a hot knife through butter. If not, then you must rely on your strategic skill and reflexes to save you.

The first few missions are tightly scripted to draw you into the action and familiarise you with the controls

Product details

Developer: Digital Reality

Publisher: GT Interactive

Telephone: 0171-258-3791

e-mail: <http://sales@gtinteractive.com>

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: December

and the multi-tasking demands of the gameplay. From mission three to mission twenty-two, the plot becomes totally non-linear, leaving you knee-deep in the 'sar' (look it up in your phrase book or our handy Hungarian guide below). You ascend the ranks, gain bigger and better warships. Your empire grows. But behind the political shenanigans, battles, and the pneumatic rising and falling of worlds, there is a backbone plot – a quest for an all-powerful weapon, hidden somewhere in the galaxy. A steady stream of clues will lead you to its location, but others may be searching for it too...

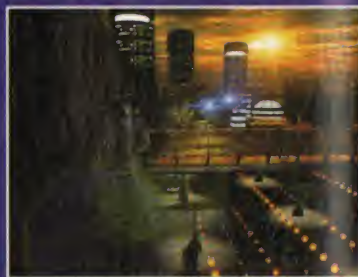
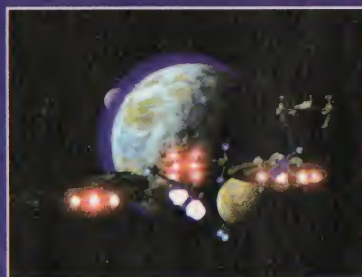
Imperium Galactica still has a bit of work to be done. The interface is likely to be changed. A few subtle changes to the combat and AI are also on the cards. All in all, it's a heady cocktail of sci-fi, storyline, trading, combat, and Sim game, plus its healthy 'backroom' development ethos, means that this may well be one sizeable Chrimble hit



Cut-scenes

Elegant 3D rendered cut-scenes may not maketh the man, but they surely maketh the man a damn sight prettier. Call them what you want – window-dressing, candy floss, distracting dullness, CD-ROM fodder, atmospheric scene setting – cut-scenes, in their rotating 3D-Studio rendered glory, are here to stay.

The graphics artistes chez Digital Reality have probably not been saturated with sophis images from *Blade Runner*, *Star Wars*, *Return Of The Jedi*, *Babylon Five* as we have in the West. Yet somehow their works pays homage, both visually and cinematically, to that splendid sci-fi pedigree. Every game and its barber does cut-scenes these days but, it must be said, that Digital Reality's panoramic cities, spinning gun installations, phallic spaceships, and planetary systems are all considerably well directed, exceptionally well-lit and modelled, and very, very, very atmospheric.



The universal 'willy-on-a-statue' gag breaks both cultural and language barriers.

Ten fantastic facts about Hungary

1. Budapest is actually two cities. One called Buda, the other Pest!
2. The word 'sar' in Hungarian means 'shit'!
3. Rather amusingly, to say hello in Hungary, you say (phonetically) "seeya"!
4. The most important phrase to learn for budding Budapest goers is (phonetically): "Say-rat nyag hot shirt" which means "Six beers please."
5. Hungarian women are very 'schwing' but very stropky!
6. Hotel accommodation, food, and drink is very cheap, but stuff like records and sporty footwear is very expensive!
7. It is considered a great insult to chink your beer glasses in a toast. A hundred years ago, a foreign army ransacked Budapest and while the Hungarian generals dangled from the rafters above, the victors clinked ale glasses in celebration!
8. Flights to Budapest on British Airways are over the one and half hour watershed. This means the stewardess are obliged to give you as much alcohol as you can imbibe for the entire journey!
9. 'Blowfloss' is another rude word.
10. Hungarians are really comedians (see pic below).



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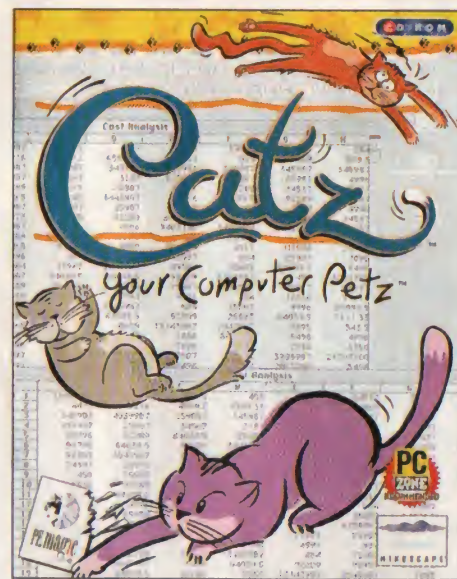


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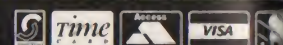


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WOOLWORTHS



All items subject to availability

War Wind



Andrew Wright gets all the good jobs. Like getting his greasy hands on a beta of War Wind, a kind of next gen Warcraft clone with knobs on. Bastard.



Product details

Developer: SSI

Publisher: Mindscape

Phone: 01444 246 333

Web: <http://www.ssionline.com>

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: October

TWO GAMES STAND HEAD AND SHOULDERS above the rest as far as real-time strategy games go - Command and Conquer and Warcraft 2. The bad news is that every software developer under the sun, and their dogs, maiden aunts and attached parasites, are going to try and imitate them in some way. The good news is that we're all going to have lots of choice and even better games like Z and 7th Level's similar epic real-timer called Dominion. Well, supposedly. One that's really caught the Zone man's eye of late is SSI's nearly-off-the-drawing-board attempt called War Wind. The fact that it looks, feel and smells like Warcraft is going to be good or bad, depending on your feelings about Warcraft, but despite the obvious similarity in terms of the overhead view, the cartoon style fantasy-sci-fi landscape and the various grunts and groans that pass for sound effects,

there's much more to it.

For a start there's more artificial intelligence built into each unit. Units will move around obstacles and don't tend to get stuck. Send a worker over to some woods or crystal deposits and he'll start doing something useful like turning them into resources. Send a fighter for a stroll near some enemy units and he'll fire at them with ranged weapons or attack in hand-to-hand combat, whichever is best.

Anchors away...

Better still is the introduction of formation movement. Multiple units can be selected and moved or sent to attack just like other similar games, but if you have certain advanced units present they can act as anchor units. You organise a group into a particular formation, select an anchor man (with a shift-right click), give it a destination and have it move off and assemble back into the right formation when the units reach their destination. Unfortunately, they won't move in that formation unless they all happen to have the same movement rate, but what the hell. It's cool.



(Left) A Tha'Roon settlement plus transport.

(Above) The Shama'Li strive to reunite the four races into a just and unified brotherhood.

Units can be transported in trucks, barges and aircraft type thingies (which are structures rather than units) and they can be upgraded with up to five bionic add-ons, like speed, strength, vision, resilience and another one. Look it's not that important, right? If I load up the game again I'll just have to play it, and I'll probably miss my deadline. Okay, so it's stealth - and yes, I missed the deadline.

Ordinary workers can be upgraded to better workers or turned into scouts or fighters. What's particularly neat is that they can also be downgraded and then upgraded again if you're short of a

(Left & right) The stolid Obblinox once served as the strength and muscle of the Tha'Roon military.



(Right) An early Shama'Li sketch.

(Below) The many-eyed Eagra race.



BEHIND THE SCENES



particular type. There are three levels for each unit type, so advanced workers, for example, will build much more quickly. Once you've got a laboratory you can also heal units that have incurred battle damage so there are plenty of strategic choices around.

Resources and building are handled very much à la *Warcraft* except there's only one resource type, although you can also find treasure and crystals and recycle something tastefully called bioslag. No, it's not something you find in a nightclub. Bioslag is what you get when you waste a mech unit, for example. To get some units you have to build certain structures and each unit has to have a certain amount of dormitory space. To upgrade units you must already have a certain number of other units in play, which can get over-complicated.

Hall of heroes

In *War Wind* you can build two types of wall, one of which causes damage to anyone attacking it, as well as two types of road that accelerates movement.

The main difference between *War Wind* and its predecessor is that additional manpower isn't created out of thin air; instead you create a pub-like building in which they appear at random and can be hired there and then, ignored or turned away. In this way you get workers, mercenaries or the occasional heroic unit. Heroes are a little like their counterparts in *Fantasy General* with enhanced capabilities and powers. Jynni the Creeper's definitely going to be my favourite – apparently she has an organic dart launcher. Lucky



(Left) Conceptual scribbling of a Tha'Room warrior.

(Right) *War Wind*'s map displays are not neglected in the slightest, as you can see here.



(Left) Are you lookin' at me? I said: are you lookin' at me?!

(Above) You are here. I think. Or somewhere close anyway.

(Above right) Lizard-like warriors; the Obblinox.

(Right) The Tha'Room. Once feared for their cruel and deadly battle skills.



mystic cult called Shama'Li.

Obviously the four races aren't anything like as highly developed as humans because the planet Yavaun still seems to have a wide variety of wildlife



from dinge vermin to boncas (big white rhino-like thingies). Sometimes you'll wish they'd become extinct as some of the randomly appearing critters take quite a bit of killing.

The point of all this is that each race has very different characteristics. Although there are equivalent units, they have different combat and defensive capabilities, sometimes spells, sometimes psychic abilities and sometimes ranged weapons. Or not, as the case may be. Each race requires a different strategy, making the game four times as interesting for lone players (once they know everything the various characters can actually do) and offering some interesting possibilities for network play.

For solo play, there will be seven campaign scenarios for each race as well as a good sprinkling (in other words, I've no idea how many) one-off scenarios. The mandatory scenario editor will also be included. *War Wind* will, of course, have network and head-to-head play capabilities but nothing has been decided about the format at this stage so you'll just have to wait. For the time being you'll just have to find other ways of winding up your network manager... Z

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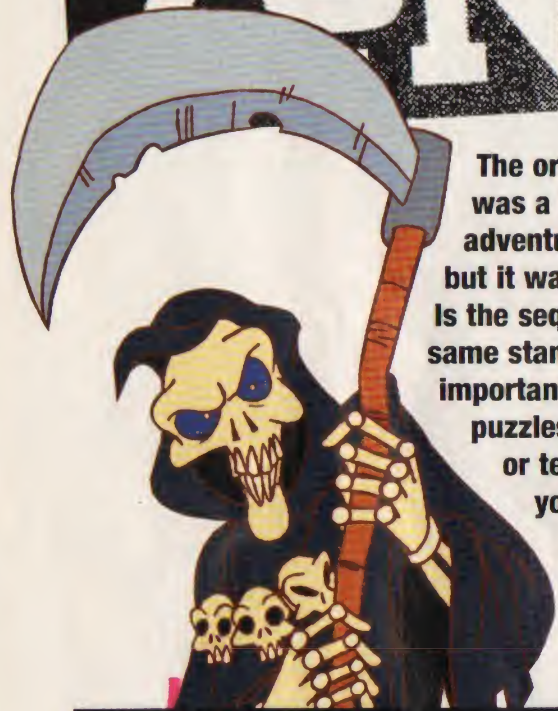
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REVIEW ZONE



The original *Discworld* was a landmark in adventure gaming, but it was bloody hard. Is the sequel up to the same standard, and more importantly, will the puzzles drive you mad or tease and caress your brain into a state of neural ecstasy? Turn the page and find out...

THE ZONE SCORING SYSTEM



90+ CLASSIC

The highest accolade a game can attain. A wonderful example of gaming excellence that deserves to be recognised and indeed cherished, or something.



80-89 RECOMMENDED

An excellent game that simply lacks that certain something that makes it one of the true greats. Well worth checking out, though.



20 and below PANTS

Absolutely bloody awful. Crap with a capital C. Naff with a capital N. You get the picture.



486 FRIENDLY

The DX2 is still one of the most popular spec machines, but how do you know what games will run on the thing? This icon shows you which games you can still enjoy even if you don't have a ninja Pentium.



PROCESSOR-HUNGRY

Some games run slowly, even on top-spec machines with ninjascope graphics cards. Just run something like *The Magic Carpet* in hi-res on virtually any PC and you end up with some-thing running in Jerk-o-vision.



WINDOWS 95

Looks for itself really – if it's got the icon slapped on it, it's been designed to take advantage of all that Windows 95 offers.

90+	CLASSIC
80-89	RECOMMENDED
70-79	GOOD
50-69	AVERAGE
40-49	BELOW AVERAGE
20-39	POOR
20 and below	PANTS

In perspective

This is designed to be a pure visual guide as to how games of a similar style compare to one another. The bars do not relate to previous review scores... they are simply an indication of how the reviewer feels about the products on a sliding scale.



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Thanks this issue to
• Amaya 'Tufty' Lopez
• Skip @ EA
• Mark Blewitt
• Neil Critchlow
• Andrew McCombie
• Stephen McGill
• Pete Hawley

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(Right) We love racing games, we think they're rather fab.



Looking back

Championship Manager 2 (again)

When I said that I was going to write my 'Looking Back' piece on *CM2* everyone in the office started laughing. You see, hardly a day goes by without me playing a couple of matches (just to keep my eye in you understand) and you just wouldn't believe the ribbing and jibes I have to put up with. "Still playing around with that fecking spread sheet, Wells? You are soooo sad!" If you've played it among company you'll know exactly what I'm wittering on about. You'll also understand why I can't help giving a wry smile every time I see the letters AMC, DML FLC etc on a car number plate. You may even understand



the agonising torment I regularly go through at 3am, when I'm desperately trying to force myself to sleep, but I'm having another *CM2* selection nightmare and my brain won't disengage. Tony Vaughan is injured and I'm frantically trying to remember who in my squad can cover for him and whether I'll have to change the formation and tactics of the team to accommodate the new player. It's sad, I know, but I just can't help it.

And now, just as my interest was finally starting to wane (after taking Millwall to European glory and quitting in the year 2015, likewise Ipswich 'til 2008 and my beloved Arsenal squad – currently standing at third in the league in the year 2002 after major trophy success), it's about to start all again 'cause Domark have just released the start of season update disc. Get well soon Tony. Your team needs you. And I need my sleep.

Jeremy Wells, Editor

Z (again)

A strange thing happened after we published our *Z* review. I spoke to lots of people on the net who were all complaining that *Z* was too easy. When Patrick reviewed it he said it was

bloody hard. We all agreed. It was bloody hard. So what were all these guys on about saying they'd completed it in a couple of days?

All was revealed at the ECTS show when I bumped into Eric Matthews (from the Bitmap Brothers). Eric explained that the final boxed version was a lot easier than the one we had in the office (ie the one that drove us up the bloody wall). Apparently the Bitmaps still had people testing the game while we were reviewing it, and a lot of the testers found it way too hard (no, really?), so, they toned it down a bit. In Eric's own words: "We wanted to make the game challenging, but not unfair. In the version you had, the computer would more often than not start a level with more units than you. In the boxed version about 90% of the levels start with both sides having an equal amount of units. We've also solved the route-finding problem (units roaming off half-way round the world to get to somewhere round the corner) by changing the map



design for some of the levels. We've also re-designed the levels so that you can rescue a potentially disastrous situation, instead of penalising you with defeat just because you made one mistake".

Eric also revealed that they will be making a 'net disk' which will enable you to play a two-player game of *Z* with your mate without having to buy another copy of the game. We'll give you more news on this when we know exactly how this is going to work. In the meantime, any of you who have been put off buying the game because it's too hard, er, it isn't, so go off and buy a copy now.

Chris Anderson, Deputy Editor

Kingdom O' Magic

What is it with me and puerile humour? I'm 36 years old and I still find farting hilariously funny. SCI's *Kingdom O' Magic* tickled my (childish) funnybone, mixing over-the-top point-and-click adventuring and tons of extremely silly and outrageous humour. A liberal dousing of gratuitous farting impressed me no end, as well as the aforementioned pumping.

Not everyone got it though – some reviewers even flogged the game to hell as they shamefully missed the point of the entire thing. Granted *Kingdom O' Magic* did look as rough as a dog's arse, but this

served only to disguise an innovative and enjoyable non-linear hybrid of the RPG and adventure genres. Three completely separate scenarios of varying difficulty proved a top idea too – rather than sticking with just the one.

The inane banter between the main two characters and the many wandering NPCs worked really well, even though the open-ended nature of the game made finding individuals a pain at times.

Kingdom O' Magic has the same humour that made *Ren & Stimpy* and *Beavis And Butt Head* so popular with morons like myself. Maybe it's about time I finally grew up. Nah, sod it. Treat yourself; have a laugh...

Paul Mallinson, News Editor



Cool games

We see hundreds of games over the months but there are a few that we hang on to and continue to play at lunchtime/when we're supposed to be doing more important stuff...

Network Q Rally
Quake
Syndicate Wars
Privateer 2: The Darkening
Scorched Planet

Crap games

There are some games that you can leave in the middle of the room with a big sign next to them saying "please steal me" and you still can't get rid of the bloody things...

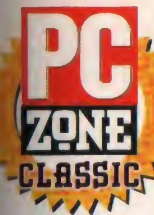
Master Of Dimensions
Olympic Soccer
Tracer
CyberBikes
Isis

Discworld II

– Missing Presumed...!?

Since Paul Presley habitually spells Wizard with two 'Z's, who better to take a look at the sequel to the best-selling adventure game of last year?

I HAVE TO BE CAREFUL WHAT I SAY about *Discworld II*. The last person to unjustly criticise a Terry Pratchett project found himself being quoted on the dust jacket of his next book where his comments made the man seem like a fool (to be exact, Tom Paulin, Irish Poet, said on BBC2's *The Late Review*: "The man's a complete amateur. He doesn't even write in chapters. Hasn't a clue". An amateur that's sold more books than God nonetheless – well, nearly). Luckily, I've got nothing but good things to say about *Discworld II* as it's one of the best adventures to come along since, well, *Discworld I*.



Rory, Rory, tell us a story

The plot has been penned by the folks at Perfect Entertainment rather than Pratchett himself, although it's based upon two or three of the books and the author did spend time going over the script to make sure it retained the right flavour. Combining *Reaper Man*, *Mort* and *Moving Pictures*, the tale is about what happens when Death goes missing. Having been caught in a *Lethal Weapon* 3-style explosive intro, the Grim Reaper has been blown to the distant continent of XXXX (pronounced Four X – it's the *Discworld* equivalent of Australia) and it's up to you as Rincewind to sort out the mess as without Death, no one's dying.

The game is split into four acts, each with a separate goal. The first is to try and summon Death to find out what's going on. The second is to travel to XXXX and persuade him to return to work. The third sees Rincewind becoming Death and the final act is where it all comes together and Rincewind has to save Death's life.

To give too much away would spoil things, suffice to say it captures the

Discworld genre perfectly, as

well as appealing to a wider audience thanks to a liberal dose of *Monty Python* about the place. The opening song is penned and sung by Eric Idle (who plays Rincewind again) and to say that it sets the tone for the rest of the game is something of an understatement.

The game really scores in the way it's constructed. My personal benchmark for cartoon-style adventures has always been the original *Monkey Island* game and *Discworld II* surpasses it easily. The game consists of four acts, each with



In Perspective

There are plenty of top-notch adventures around at the moment, each catering for different tastes. Here's the top three:

Discworld II

Discworld

The Gene Machine



dozens of tasks to perform, packed with the kind of sarcastic humour that made TV shows like *Blackadder* so popular.

Is it stupidly difficult again?

Unlike the first game, the challenge has been toned down slightly in response to all the feedback

received. That's not to say it's perfect, rather that it's better structurally. A lot of the first game was spent wandering around with about two dozen objects and with no clue as to what you should be doing. This time you always know what it is you have to do, just not how to do it. Plus, the puzzles are less illogical and more fitting to the continuation of the story, eliminating the high frustration-factor that was associated with the first game, but without losing any of the challenge.

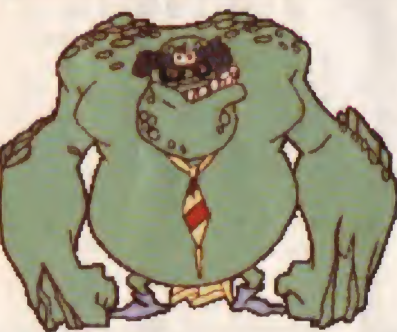
Monkey Island's strength was that it piled puzzle on top of puzzle so that every time you took one step towards a goal, the goal would suddenly move off to the side and force you to turn around. Most of today's adventures don't seem to bother with this much depth, opting for a single-layering effect. There is a locked door. To open it you



(Above left) The Elven Queen does what she does best – pose.

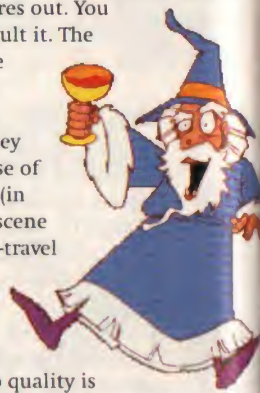
(Above) Arrgh! Fishing nets. Nooo! Make the nightmares stop...

(Left) Death's granddaughter, Susan. Ahh, sweet.



course, it's easy to let this become more frustrating than challenging, so the key is to present these problems in a way that keeps the player's interest.

This is where the rich presentation of *Discworld II* scores out. You simply can't fault it. The animations are superb, almost Disney-like in quality, and they far exceed those of the first game (in fact, there's a scene involving time-travel that will show you exactly how improved they are). The audio quality is



(Right top) Rincewind learns the art of camel-spittle avoidance.

(Right centre) Altogether now. "I'm Brian and so's my wife. Always look on the bright side of death. De-doo. De-dum-de-de-doo."

(Right bottom) Death's horse. A fearsome, magical beast capable of flying over vast interdimensional distances in a heartbeat and deadlier than Champion, Mr. Ed and Silver rolled into one. Its name? Er, Binky...



need a key. The key is in a jar on the table. As simple as that. *Monkey Island's* approach, which is exactly the approach *Discworld II* has taken, is to say, there is a locked door. To open it you need a key. On the table are seven keys and you can only pick one of them. The table is surrounded by a moat. The moat is too wide to cross, and so on. And then, once you'd got hold of the key, the door would do something annoying like hide the lock.

What this does is increase the challenge level of the game tenfold. Of

also superb, with brilliant voice overs mixing with wonderfully atmospheric musical scores – always a much neglected area of game design in my book.

The curse of competition

Anyway, we've now reached the part of the proceedings where I have to dust off the giant Score-O-Tron machine, feed in all the data regarding the game and press the green flashing button marked EVALUATE!

Before I assign a numerical value to the score box, I have to take you back, back in time, back to the misty bygone era that was 1995.

The world was a younger, more innocent place back then. Noel's House



Party was at the peak of its popularity, the horrors of the Spice Girls were still just a gleam in a pervy record producer's eye, and Newcastle were a prominent force in British Premier League football.

In the January 1995 issue (issue number 22 for all those issue number junkies out there), we were treated to the original *Discworld* game and came away suitably impressed, awarding it a score of 96. A trifle generous, you think? Well, at the time there were very few quality adventure games about and we were perhaps a little grateful for one to have appeared. There's no denying that it was indeed a class game. It was challenging, entertaining and funny – the best adventure since *Monkey Island* some might have said.

Now, as you have read, I'm suitably impressed with the

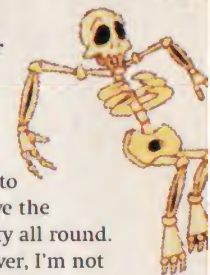
(Left) Rincewind tries to serenade the love of his life. Perhaps 'A Wizard's Staff Has A Knob On The End' wasn't the best choice.

(Below left) Death and Binky try out for the annual Biggin Hill Aerial Rodeo.

game. I'd say it's better than the original simply because it uses all the same formulae and

manages to improve the quality all round. However, I'm not going to award it an even higher score. Aside from the fact that a score of 97 would make it one of the highest rated games in the history of PC Zone, there is also far more in the way of competition about at the moment and what it doesn't do is separate itself from the pack in any major way. *Broken Sword* is a similar-

looking game and is also quite playable, as is *The Gene Machine*. *Zork Nemesis* provides an interactive atmosphere



In conversation with Terry Pratchett

Author, creator of the *Discworld* and all-round top literary bloke, Terry Pratchett has been writing books since 1987 and has steadily worked his way into the bestseller lists with each successive release. We caught up with the man on the eve of a US promotional tour.

PCZ: I get the impression that your involvement with this sequel is less than with the first. How confident are you in *Perfect Entertainment* when it comes to capturing the essence of the *Discworld* series?

TP: You're right – up to a point. I got

very involved in the first one because, well, it was the first one. I was rather more relaxed about *DWI* because they'd done the first one well, and I more or less restricted my involvement to some 'polite suggestions', such as getting the bugs out before it went on sale, and doing a fair amount of work on the script. In short, I was more prepared to trust people.

PCZ: What do you feel the sequel will offer to the non-*Discworld* reader?

TP: The reason the *DW* games have been made is that the books were successful, but you don't need to read

the books in order to play them (although *Guards! Guards!* would have been helpful for the first game, and *Mort* and *Reaper Man* might be of assistance in this one). What the game will offer to the non-*DW* reader is a superb game. And, of course, an introduction to a fascinating series of books, nudge, nudge...

PCZ: *Discworld 2* has quite a substantial Monty Python feel to it. How close do you feel the two genres are?

TP: I don't think they're very similar. Apart from anything else, *DW* is saner than *Python*! The *Python*esque 'feel' in



places is a sort of conspiracy between the game designers and Eric Idle's voice. What scamps they are. (Grins)

PCZ: How much of a surprise was the enormous success of the first game to you (*Discworld* being the third most popular PC game of 1995)?

TP: I expected it to do well! I think it was the voices that made it successful – for me, Eric Idle now is the voice of Rincewind.

PCZ: In your eyes, how good a job of capturing the *Discworld* 'feel' did the game do?

TP: I was very happy about that. *Discworld* has changed a lot in the last ten years, but it certainly had the feel of the earlier books.

PCZ: How much time did you spend playing it once it was finished?

TP: I played it all the way through to the end! The fact that I knew the script helped a bit, but not as much as you'd think. I spent far too much time running round Ankh-Morpork with fishing nets when I ought to have been writing.

PCZ: Where do you feel it either, at

the very most, didn't work or at the very least, could have been better?

TP: I think we got bogged down a bit with ink spots and such, and I was a bit unhappy about one or two places that seemed too sequence-dependent. It was sometimes too easy to almost get things right and then get thrown off the scent because they hadn't worked. I think we'll be a bit more player-friendly this time. I don't think the phrase 'That doesn't work!' occurs at all.

PCZ: I understand you've finally relented to Hollywood pressure and given the okay for a *Discworld*

film to be put forward. What finally swung it for you?

TP: The *Mort* project has been around for four or five years. There have been a lot of false starts. I remember one American film guy saying "the American public isn't ready for Death as a sympathetic character" about 18 months before *Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey* came out, and who was the popular character in that? Well, well, well, it was Death. I think we might have a decent chance this time. But, hey, this is the film business. They've paid me money, but it still might never happen.

Blood Out Of A Mouse

(Warning: the following describes one of the game's intricate puzzle sequences. If you don't want to spoil the game, then don't read on. If you just don't care about such things, have a rather foolhardy manner or the memory of a goldfish, then go ahead. Knock yourself out...)

A good example of the puzzle structure I was talking about elsewhere comes early on in Act One. One of the ingredients Rincewind needs to collect is 4cc of mouse blood. To get it, Rincewind needs to become a vampire and bite a hapless rodent. This requires the 'borrowing' of an old vampire's false teeth and, naturally, a mouse. The first is obtained by finding the vampire's sleeping place and taking them from the glass of water beside his bed. To do this you need a ladder to climb to the coffin. The ladder can only be gotten from an amorous dwarf who requires the name of a suitable woman first. Even once you've got the ladder you still need to convince the vampire to go to bed, which requires getting a rooster to crow ahead of time (since the Act takes place at night). This means catching a rooster with the use of drugged corn (which has to be found), and then you have the problem of sobering it up again to make it crow. And then, of course, there's the small problem of finding a willing mouse...



second to none and *The Pandora Directive* has just as much humour to it. Of course, this is not meant as a criticism, you understand. I'm just saying that it's part of a larger crowd now and this

affects the way you view things. Plus there's the forthcoming *Curse Of Monkey Island* from LucasArts and who knows how good that will be?

But in and of itself, *Discworld II* really is superb. Fans and non-fans of Pratchett should all find something to enjoy, the former being able to revel in the elements of the author's



(Right) How to be a loony - No. 34 in a series of 50.

(Far Left) Cut Me Own Throat Dibbler tries to flog his grandmother.



world made real, the latter being attracted by the other more mainstream Python-esque side of things.

Of course, if you're not a fan of either then you're still left with a challenging adventure game to play with. What more could you want? **Z**

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb (16Mb recommended)

Processor: 486DX2/66

Graphics: VGA/SVGA

Sound: All major cards

Controls: Mouse

Score

93

Everything you could want in an adventure game.

Price: £49.99 Release Date: November
Publisher: Psygnosis
Tel: 0151 282 3000

dan The People's Choice
Personal Computers

In conversation with Nigel Planer

Iconic comic actor of the '80s, thanks to his portrayal of Neil in *The Young Ones*, Nigel Planer has since been involved in numerous comedy projects including the brilliant *I Am Actor*. Currently he's promoting his new book (written in conjunction with Red Dwarf's Robert Llewellyn) *Therapy And How To Avoid It*.

PCZ: How did you get involved with the *Discworld II* project?

NP: Well, I read all the Pratchett novels onto Audio Books. I've done about 12 and the people at Perfect Entertainment got to hear of that. So I've already done a lot of the voices there. I must have done about 20 or so for the game.

PCZ: So you were already very familiar with the *Discworld* genre. Were you a fan before you did the books?

NP: Not at all. I'd never read any, actually. I'd done a lot of different Audio Books and suddenly got the request to go and do that and found that because of the Pythonesque humour I had a good feel for the speed of the dialogue.

PCZ: How different was the process of recording the game's voices from the regular Audio Books?

NP: Well, you're sitting there with

a microphone so it's similar in that respect, but the main difference is that with the book you're sat there reading all the prose and doing all the voices. For the game you're just reading your lines and even then it's not like a radio play with all the other actors there. They're all edited in later. So you're just on your own, blind. The books take about three days to do, the game took just one, very, very long day.

PCZ: How familiar with the original game were you?

NP: Well, until I did this game I wasn't at all familiar with it. But Perfect sent me *Discworld* which really got me into it. I've got an eight-year-old son and we switched it on at about eleven one morning, we didn't break for lunch and when I next looked at my watch it was half past six that night. We hadn't even got to the end of Act One. Even with the little hint book. A couple of mates have also got kids and I've given them my number and every now and then I'm like a scout leader. I get a call saying, "How do I get out of hyperspace?" or something like that.

PCZ: Do you think this will lead you into other games?

NP: Well, I'm a convert because of *Discworld*. I had started on some others but my computer suddenly got a Type 11 error which I haven't



been able to get fixed. So I'm a bit pissed off. Just as the enthusiasm started, my computer jammed up and I can't use the CD. It lost all my saved games so we've had to play it all again.

PCZ: Welcome to the world of PC games. Is this an area that you might want to get involved with professionally again?

NP: Actually, I've started to write a game with my brother and the help of Perfect Entertainment. What's good about *Discworld* and using comedy is that you have to think laterally and possibly you might have to cheat to get the result. It's quite mind-strengthening like that. They're boring if you just do what you're told. It's interesting to have to get into the mind of the programmer, to think obscurely to solve the problem.



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Name: Strife™. **Format:** PC. **Style:** Roll 'em up (RPG narrative with 'shoot 'em up action'). Stalk 'n' talk. **Requirements:** Ball (Brains and Balls – you must learn before you burn). **Graphics:** Doom™ engine. **Features:** M.I.C.K. (Meet Interact Cheat Kill). Octoplay (8 player network). **Author:** Studio 3DO, <http://www.3do.com>. **When:** October 1996. **Where:** Anywhere good.

Strife

(for eight people)

Ingredients: 1 brain (medium), 1 pair of balls (large)
Blend until smooth.
Sip during game play.



Almost exactly a year since we previewed it as Madden 96, Madden 97 is finally released for the PC. We gave it to Patrick McCarthy, because his timekeeping is almost as bad.

Madden NFL '97



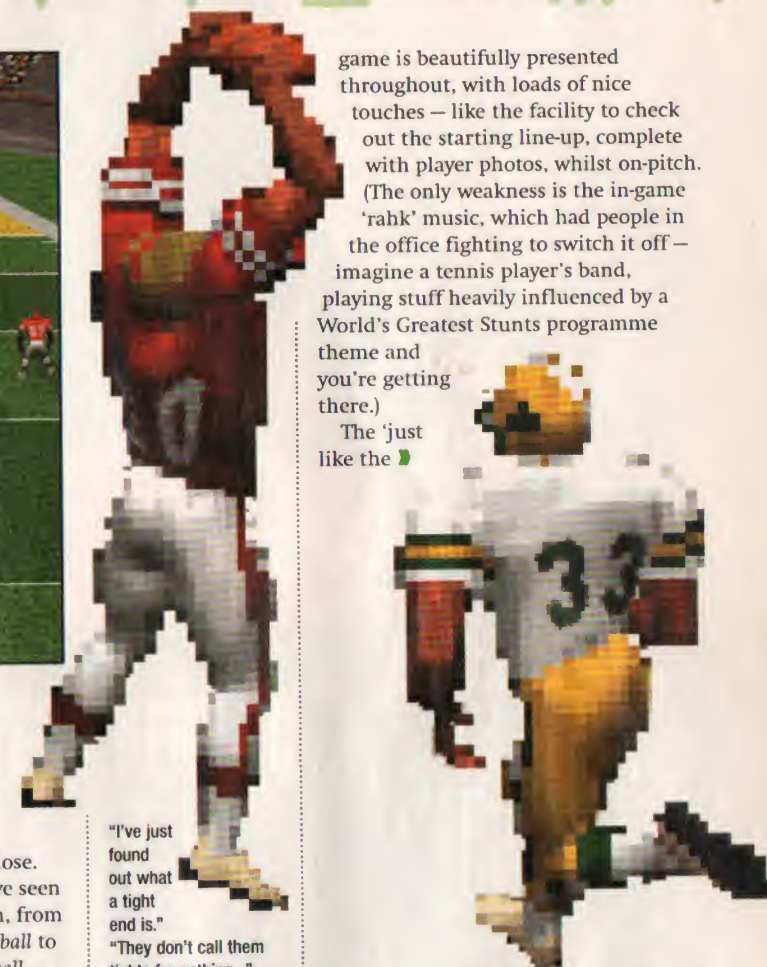
This is the first version of Madden to reach the PC for many, many years – since the days, in fact, when an EGA monitor was something to boast about, rather than something to hollow out to make an attractive hanging basket. While people with 16-bit consoles have been enjoying regular Madden action in the intervening years, PC owners have only had the memory of the original PC

version and its tiny figures. Resembling Sensible Soccer players who'd been semi-inflated by bicycle pump, they were mouse-controlled and emitted sound effects like a guinea-pig farting down the other end of a garden hose.

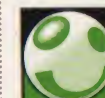
Since those glorious years, we've seen many claimants to the PC's crown, from the ancient Mike Ditka's Power Football to the current, rather good FPS Football – interestingly, though, they're always referred to as "the nearest thing to John Madden for the PC." Well, now it's finally here. And it's very good.

Just like the telly

When you load the game you'll find yourself plunged neck-deep into a seething pit of logos, as the NFL, NFL Players Association, NFL Films, STATS Inc, EA Sports and Superbowl XXXI all get shoved in your face. This salvo of trademarks rolls into an excellent opening sequence that puts many TV credit sequences to shame. In fact, the

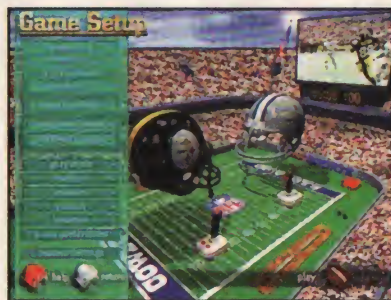


"I've just found out what a tight end is."
"They don't call them tight ends for nothing..."



The play's the thing

One area where the game hasn't progressed from the early PC version is in play creation. You can customise a playbook, but there's no way of making up your own plays from scratch. When you think that even its distant ancestor allowed you to create your own, this is disappointing for anyone who enjoys the coaching and play-calling side of the game. If that's your bag, Front Page Sports Football has a superb play-editor, with facilities for moving players around both before and after the snap.



"telly" effect is kept up throughout. As well as John Madden's trademark interjections, Pat Summerall, his real-life partner in the coolest pairing in sport, dispenses the play-by-play stuff, and Leslie Visser even gives you injury reports from "down on the field". The whole thing flows very well. It helps that American football is a stop-start affair, and that most of the commentary takes place after the event even in real life, but it's still really atmospheric. Summerall has that authoritative voice that just sounds right, and the general comments and injury reports flow so much more easily than the halting stuff you get in football, which have to be done mix-and-match style as the action unfolds.

Play the game

There are the usual options for exhibition and league play, and the facility to create customised leagues and play schedules as simple or complicated as you like (see "Man and Superman" boxout.) You can play and coach, or just



"Hey, didn't I just see you on the other page?"
"Yup, our art editor is a tight end, too..."

coach, and there all the current teams along with all the great teams from history – the 1982 Redskins, 1968 Jets, etc. Strangely, given the game's console roots, and passing methods, there are no facilities for gamepads and as a result, passing can be a bit fiddly. You can edit your own playbooks, but unlike in *FPS Football*, you can't create individual plays from scratch and the selection of plays is nowhere near as plentiful – but enough for most people.

Aiiieee! My eyes! My eyes!

Graphically, it's lush. Unlike most of the Virtual Stadium games, there are only three camera angles, with options for fixed or dynamic cameras. But given that the only really helpful angle is from the end-zone, this is okay. There's a lot of graphical detail – so much so, that in wider shots, moving the stadium around to swap views was in jerk-o-vision on a P166. But you can switch off any or all of the texturing if you want – from the crowd and sky textures, through end-zone, grass and on-pitch logos and markings, to numbers and shadows on players – even the stadium.

And for those of you who like a bit of multimecja, you can also go to Madden University to learn stuff like why the

tight end is so called (and why it makes him so popular with his team-mates in the bath after the game). As for direct comparisons between this and *FPS Football*, this is far better presented, looks better and plays better – if you have the hardware. *FPS Football* has more depth, with long-term career coaching modes and 'proper' drafts, but nowhere near the appeal of this for the less anal, or more casual, player. **Z**

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb RAM
Processor: Pentium 75
Graphics: VGA/SVGA
Sound: SoundBlaster
Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Score

87

The new best American football game for the PC.

Price: £39.95 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Tel: 01753 549442

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DAWN OF DARKNESS



18

ocean

scorchio!

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"I read in the paper that the so-called 'greenhouse effect' had been caused by farting cows," said Paul Mallinson. "I'm not sure if it's true, but I haven't smoked since."

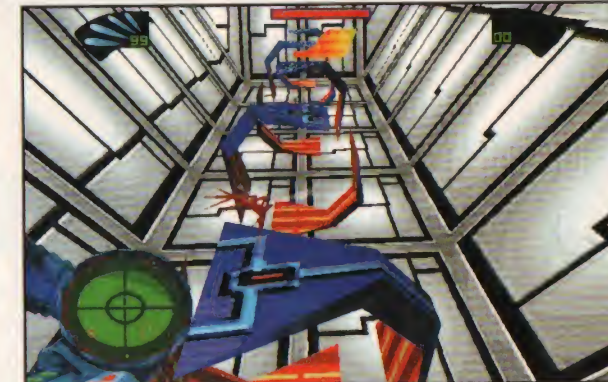
LIGHTNING-FAST ARCADE BLASTERS tend to have a fanatical following the world over – well, the good ones, that is. Games such as *Tempest*, *Robotron*, *Choplifter* and Eugene Jarvis' seminal *Defender* made a name for themselves in the formative years of computer gaming by stripping away virtually everything else in the program but the gameplay. There were no fancy graphics, no poncy cut-scenes – just a few flashing lights, a control interface and the player. Usually with a bunch of your mesmerised mates rubber-necking over your shoulder down at Noble's Arcade emporium (the one with the china figurines in the

window and that annoying git standing next to you going "Hey mate, looks like you've got a nudge there!").

The saying "the simplest games are always the best" may not ring true in every instance, but in the case of the shoot 'em up it doesn't help to over-complicate matters. Criterion's *Scorched Planet* is an extremely commendable attempt to recreate the 'buzz' and simplicity of the great *Defender*, but in a very '90s way. Forget the rubbish story, the silly names (Alex Gibson – I ask you...) and cheesy FMV sequences, they're nothing to do with anything really. What *Scorched Planet* requires are fast reflexes and a strong constitution.

A, one, two, three, four...

The idea is simple. You're supposed to be some bloody do-gooder passer-by 'saviour' to a group of human colonists under attack by a huge alien spacecraft and the entire contents of its never-ending fighter bay. These colonists (little chunky blokes that stomp around the huge polygonal landscape) are vital for progress, the aim of the game being to



(Left) Bitten by spiders, these zombies are on the lookout for more people to infect. Cure them within two minutes or their heads explode. Cool.

(Above) God damn aliens have hidden my Space Gate inside this metallic box!



(Left) If you get bored, it's possible to round up your colonists for a camping holiday at the seaside. Now we've brought the camping stove, a pan for the beans...

(Right) Mutant Space – where everything goes pear-shaped.

(Below) You've got to search for the heeero inside yourself, yooo've got to search for the heeero insaaaaaad!

rescue as many as possible. They can actually help out too, finding new bits for your ship and even shooting the aliens. Just give them the chance and they'll do their best to help you. Let too many die though, and it's pretty much game over as you are plunged into the darkness of Mutant Space where the player is offered the chance to redeem himself in a fight to the death. So protecting the workforce is of primary concern and luckily the vehicle at your disposal is well-equipped to handle that.

Everybody going' kung fu fightin'

A hybrid of both pseudo tank and pseudo jet fighter, your craft can morph fluidly between the two at the stroke of a key. In 'jet' mode it moves quickly with a high degree of manoeuvrability, which is ideal for combat, but it cannot pick up colonists or power-ups. 'Tank' mode offers more protection at the expense of speed and movement, but it uses less fuel and can pick up the bonuses by simply driving over them.



Scorched Planet



The controls are simple and the cockpit view is adequate, the interior of which comes adorned with all the usual techno gubbins (scanner, weapons and fuel gauges, etc.). A neat 180 degree flip manoeuvre, which instantly reverses your direction (borrowed from *Defender*), is a brilliant addition which contributes so much to the intuitive nature of the control system. Ultimately it takes only a short amount of time to atone to the dynamics of both the tank and jet, and you'll be morphing from one to another with consummate ease after completing the first couple of 'easy' levels.

Altogether, there are eight stages, each with three sub-missions spread over an array of terrain that ranges from ice to desert to mountainous regions – all finely texture-mapped. Graphically, *Scorched Planet* is sound enough. Everything is constructed of polygons (even the front

end which is a rather smart *Butterfly* rip-off) in high or low-res, depending on what your machine can handle. A P133 will give the player an acceptably smooth game in full monty 640 x 480 mode (*Scorched Planet* also supports a number of accelerator cards, such as the Matrox Mystique) but, to be honest, the lightning speed of the gameplay means that for most people the super-smooth low-res option becomes the preferred choice after initial experimentation.

As fast as lightning...

Ultimately, it is this inherent speed and the easy controls that make *Scorched Planet* such a buzz to play. As you progress a puzzle element is introduced that makes your craft start to malfunction, forcing the player to re-think their strategy. Similarly, as you progress alien characteristics change, and the really nasty ones (such as the spiders that turn the colonists into zombies) are enough to cause heart palpitations in

(Top left) As a million different games have said in the past: "...and only you can save them."

(Above) This big mother ship-type thing is blowing up my cities, which I'm not best pleased about. Unfortunately, shooting the thing does nothing but get you killed.

even the most experienced of gamers. On later levels, when rock hard gun turrets and end-of-level bosses appear things start to become even more difficult. Challenging it certainly is, but rarely frustrating, because it's so well thought out.

Scorched Planet is a gameplayer's game and deserves to do well. It's not perfect – at times I felt lost in a sea of power-ups, and cycling through the inventory is sometimes problematic in the heat of battle.

The Mutant Space sections, potentially a good idea, I found to be a bit of a waste of time, mainly due to the absurd difficulty levels and the fruitless blasting which rapidly became boring.

But these are minor quibbles in the whole scheme of things. Overall, *Scorched Planet* is cool to handle and sexy by design. On a fast PC it's an intense and absorbing ride. Shut your eyes when the FMV pops up, concentrate only on the game, and you will have a good time. **Z**

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX2/66
Graphics: VGA, SVGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Mouse, joystick, keyboard

Score

82

Almost, but sadly not quite, *Defender*.

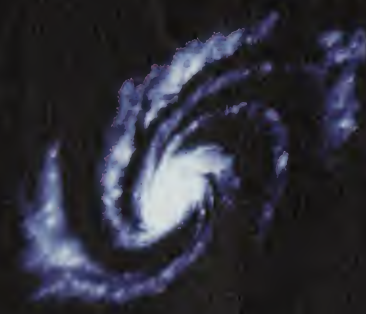
Price: £44.99 Release Date: Out now
Publisher: Virgin
Tel: 0171-368 2255

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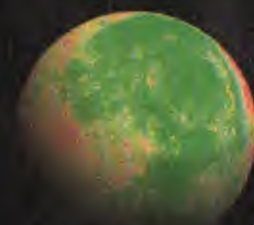
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It's sheep we're up against

Those poor trapped colonists aren't having much of a good time it seems. In fear of their lives and constantly under fire from not only the aliens, but also from stray shots from your own craft, they are sent out again and again on seemingly impossible search and retrieve missions to maintain the ever-depleting resources of your swanky death machine. Pick them up, put them down – give them guns even – and they run around causing all manner of bother for those dastardly aliens. Co-ordinating their movement is simple enough, and here's how you do it.



Step one: Land near some civilian colonists. Turn into the tank and open the bay doors – this lures them inside (and who knows what goes on in there...)



Step two: Before flying off to find stuff, decide on a rendezvous point and drop a beacon there. Zip off, find some goodies, then send your little scavengers out to collect them.



Step three: The colonists will automatically head in the direction of the beacon, dragging anything collectable they find on the way. Here are two colonists demonstrating the fact.



Step four: If all goes to plan and none of your blokes are killed or nabbed on the way back to the meeting place, there should be a fair-sized collection of booty waiting for you to pick up.

Network Q RAC Rally

Duncan MacDonald thinks he's a really good rally driver simply because he once crashed his VW camper van into a Range Rover. It makes no sense, we know, but please humour him as he attempts to review *Network Q RAC Rally*.

HERE'S A LITTLE SONG I WROTE earlier, and it's all about how brilliant I am at driving. It's set to the Old MacDonald Had A Farm tune. Here goes: "I'm so skill at driving, yeah - I'm fab fab, fab fab, fab. I can go faster than anyone else - I can can, can can, can!" It goes on for about 30 verses, but you've probably got the drift. I even crash excellently.

PC
ZONE
CLASSIC



all sort of nonchalant, as relaxed as can be. Let's call him Captain Scarlet (because he's pretending to be indestructible). He's watching an Audi Quattro hacking towards him, not yet aware yet that it's actually an 'out of control' Audi Quattro - something altogether less edifying. It nears by the femto-second, looming larger and larger. His parka-clad peers eventually click, and begin diving sideways, into bushes and whatnot. Captain Scarlet, however, takes a couple more seconds to realise the truth of the situation, by which time his only option is to leap backwards. As the Audi Quattro driver suddenly regains control and avoids the grassy bank, fearless Captain Scarlet is entering the chilly waters of a Welsh lake. Ha ha!

'look at us, we're not afraid'. Deep in their minds, however, they're adding 'besides, these drivers are so good we're actually safe as houses!' But, of course, they're not, as you'll know if you've seen the 'geezers and lake' TV out-take. No? You haven't seen it? It's brilliant. There's this crap bloke, okay, and he's standing in the most ludicrous trackside position possible. He's got his hands on his hips,



I do, I do! I once piled my old VW camper into the back of a Range Rover at 50 mph and emerged completely unscathed, even though I wasn't wearing a seatbelt. Ho! And as for the occupants of the Range Rover in question? Ha! How about this for extreme non-excellence: when I eventually received the itemised bill from their insurance company one of the entries read "Dry cleaning for a soiled pair of trousers, £7.50". It's true, I swear it. Cacked pantaloon.

That was a link, believe it or not...

The spectators at RAC Rally events often cack their pantaloon as well. They huddle together on grassy banks at the apex of dangerous corners as if to say

(Above) One of the best things about *Network Rally* is the number of tracks - there's 28 of 'em and they're all rather excellent. Some take nearly half an hour to complete (!)

(Right) As well as different types of track surfaces, you'll have to contend with increasingly difficult conditions - such as fog, snow, ice and night time stages. Don't forget to dip!



Rally



We finally reach the game...

Network Q RAC Rally is littered with little rallying clips, although, unfortunately, the Bloke In Lake out-take isn't among them. But I'm not here to talk about FMV sequences - I'm here to talk about the bits that go between them. The game, in other words. In fact, you'll have seen a tiny bit of it for yourself if you've loaded this month's coverdisk, as there's an entire stage to play through. And this fact, to be honest, is also rather handy for me. You see, *Network Q* is pretty processor-hungry if you want to see it at its best. It's eminently toggleable, admittedly, but only you know how much (or rather how little) you're prepared to put up with.

So - did it run fine on your machine in all its everythingness? Then no problems. Did you have to shorten the horizon? Hmm. Did you then have to lose detail? Poo. And did you have to shrink the screen until the viewing area was the size of a matchbox? Oh dear. What I'm suggesting, basically, is that you'll now know that when I say things like 'pixel-sized trees in the far distance grow alarmingly quickly in size until they rush past your offside window in a blur of photo-realistic leaf-ishness' I'm doing so only because I played *Network Q* on the office P166. Comprendski? So edit my enthusiasm as you see fit.

Courses for horses...

You've seen 'the track' (assuming, as said, you've played the cover disk). But that's as nowt - because the complete version of *Network Q* contains a whopping 28

tracks. Yup, 28: which to hammer the point home is as many fingers and thumbs as you'd find on the hands of three whole people (er, if the third person was called Billy 'No Thumbs' McVicar or something). You've got to applaud, though, haven't you, especially when you learn that - just as with *Indycar* or *FIGP* - all these tracks are true to life and lovingly re-created from the real things. And while some may be on the short side (a fair bit shorter than the one you've played) others are virtually, er, well... you can get tired. Really. One of them goes on for about half an hour. You could nod off if it wasn't for the digitised voice of Tony 'Top Gear' Mason continually screaming "Hard left, hard right!" in your ear.

Tony 'Top Gear' Mason...

While on the subject of Tony Mason, you may be wondering why Europress got him to do the in-car navigation voice. Two reasons: (a) he was a real-life RAC rally co-driver at about the same time that Arkwright invented the Spinning Jenny, and (b) he was quite cheap as 'celebrities' go (£1,500 for the day, apparently). However, a slight bête noire here is that Tony sometimes gives duff

(top) You gotta roll with it - you gotta take your time!

(Left) The graphical detail is very high all round. Track side detail is excellent and all the cars are very well modelled. You'll need a nice Pentium to run the game full-on, but you can crank down the detail to help speed things up.

(Below) The cars do actually handle differently, and you can opt for a front, rear or four wheel drive car depending on your preference.

In Perspective

There have been some good arcade racing games on the PC, but *Network Q RAC Rally* has undoubtedly got the most to offer.

Network Q RAC Rally

The Need For Speed

Screamer

information. "Hairpin right!" he screamed at me one time. He might well have added "But you'll never make it, I should have told you earlier!". It's all part of the fun though, I suppose. And anyway, a little game I sometimes play is to add my own scenario to games: and in *Network Q* it's that the previous evening Tony discovered, through a mutual acquaintance, that I'd been shagging his wife for six years, and that his daughter Sarah was in fact MY daughter Sarah.

Stupid Welsh names...

A lot of the rally is based in Wales, meaning that you have to put up with driving through places called Dyfi and Cefn. And that makes me very angry - but not half as angry as the ludicrously fickle Welsh weather. With the 'always sunny' option turned off, the elements are introduced bigtime. Rain, snow and fog happen all over the shop, occasionally compounded by the presence of darkness. There aren't many streetlights in Dyfnant, as you can imagine.

Still, this weather stuff certainly makes for some atmospheric (no pun intended) gameplay. Fog reduces in density with altitude, for instance, meaning that at those near sea-level moments you're

completely in the bitter hands of

Tony, the husband of the mother of your love child. He's not so completely in control when you're simply in snow, however. But then again, neither are you. (Especially if you picked the wrong tyres.) And the rain. Ah, the rain. If ever the visuals and sonics of a game gelled to perfection, it's in the downpour sections of

Network Q. You know how cosy it is inside a car during a thunderstorm or whatever? Like when you're parked up or whatever? It's reproduced perfectly. Pull over to the side of the road. Sip on a cup of tea. Spark up a ciggie. Allow



Honest Joe's Quality Motors...



- 6 Proton Wira:** Only three owners from new, an' two of 'em 'ave died of old age. Three tharsand on the clock. Superb runabout. Bargain. (Etc.)
- 3 Renault Megane:** The adverts reckon it talks to yer. But that's bollocks. I ain't never 'eard it say nuffink. Nice airbags though, innit. (Haw haw).
- 4 VW Golf GTI 16V:** (Putting on accent). "Hullo, I'm posh me, isn't it!" Haw haw! Naaaah! I ain't posh. An' this ain't neither, but it goes some!
- 5 Skoda Felicia:** Say what you like abart Skodas, but... I'll agree with yer. Haw haw! Just me likkle joke, innit. Give us an offer, eh?
- 1 Subaru Impreza:** A classy motor what'll get you noticed. Top speed in telephone numbers and more horses than The High Chapperal. Gizzit!
- 2 Ford Escort RS Cosworth:** What more d'ya need to know? It's a fackin' Cossie, ain't it. A geezer's motor! Top joyriders nick nuffink else!

yourself to be hypnotised into oblivion by the swoosh and click of the windscreen wipers coupled with the pitter patter of raindrops on the roof. Snooze dreamily. (Er, aren't you meant to be racing? Ed.)

But rallying is boring, isn't it?

As a TV spectator sport rallying, it has to be said, is a tad on the yawny side. The 'doing', however, is another thing altogether. It's you against the clock. You, on your own, against yourself. There are other cars, admittedly, but you never get to see them. (Just their times, at the end of each stage). With 28 stages, however, and with the constant need to fix any damage your car has



(Above) Look out Mr Anorak - I'm not gonna be able to stop so you'd better leggit, sharpish!

incurred en-route (within a given time), that's still a lot to be getting on with. However, Network Q adds more. Want a 'real' race? Then select the pertinent option. Now you'll start on a grid with a bunch of other cars. Their mission? To carve you up and piss you off. Want it harder? Then make the roads narrower (there are three settings). Harder still? Then select one of the five increasingly difficult 'arcade' options. It's the same gig, but this time there are timer checkpoints, and we all know what that means. (And, as far as I can make out, to succeed on the harder levels you need to be 'magic', like David Copperfield.)

The ultimate buzz however - and I know it's not too many people who are going to be able to experience it - is the 'office link-up'. Eight players on 1px. Rear-view mirrors containing detail to kill for. Argie bargie to the nth degree, and then some. Mind you, there's always the two player serial link up if you can be arsed to haul your kit to a chum's.

Sega Rally? Screamer? Etc?

The few comparisons that have to be made are as follows...

(Question) Is Network Q better than Sega Rally on the Saturn?

(Answer) In the short-term maybe not, but in the long term, yes.

(Question) Is it better than Screamer?

(Answer) For an instant 'buzz', no; but for the long haul, easily.

(Question) What about F1GP2?

(Answer) Er, no, it isn't. But then again, they're such completely different 'sports' that it's hard to make direct comparisons.

(Question) Need For Speed?

(Answer) I'd say they were almost equal - and I absolutely love Need For Speed, so that's quite a compliment.

So there you go. Just look at the screenshots and ask yourself whether or not you love pissing about in cars. If the answer is 'yes', and your computer passed the bench-test mentioned earlier, then I suggest you pop t'shop. **Z**

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: DX2/66
Graphics: VGA/SVGA
Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles
Controls: Keyboard, joystick, wheel & pedals

Score

94

An excellent driving game. If it had on-coming traffic and coppers à la Need For Speed it would have scored 150 trillion.

Price: £39.99 Release Date: Out now
Publisher: Europress
Tel: 01625 859333

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(Above left) You can set up your car and change the brakes, suspension, tyres, steering etc, depending on the weather and type of surface you'll be driving on. This gives the game greater depth.



(Left) The sound and commentary are excellent. For example, when you drive in a blizzard you get that satisfying crunchy-cum squelch noise you get when you wear wellies in the snow. Cool!

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WARNER INTERACTIVE

What's hard, hot, and throbs between your legs? **Charlie Brooker** knows, and he's sitting on one right now. Indulging in a heavy bout of fisting. An indefensibly pornographic way of introducing *Road Rash*? Write in and let us know...



Road Rash 95



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486/DX2

Graphics: VGA

Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Controls: Keyboard, mouse and joystick

Note: Windows 95 only. Direct 3D supported

the mouth with a bloody big truncheon – it's all part of the fun.

If you actually manage to finish a race in one piece, or even win it, you'll be rewarded with some dosh which you can use to upgrade your bike. This means that you'll (supposedly) be more competitive and win more races. The only thing is, as you get better, the tracks get more twisty and turny and your opponents start to get even nastier. It's all pretty standard stuff, but that's the beauty of this kind of game: you can just stick it in your CD drive and play it

for a quick fix, or sit in for an evening and try to work your way through a full season.

Bloody tricky

Aside from the racing opposition, there are other fun diversions (such as mowing down pedestrians

and bludgeoning the occasional police officer) and some bloody tricky courses. The downside? Clumsy sound effects and the odd rosey sprite, poor in-game music (why you can't listen to the 'big name' rock tracks which accompany the menu system during the action itself is beyond me), and no bloody rear-view mirror. You'll be too busy kicking the shite out of all and sundry to care about any of that, mind. **Z**



She done me wrong

Since this is the 1990s and not the 1890s, *women* are allowed to take part in violent, amoral motorbike races. Hence the female competitors who crop up in *Road Rash*.

Now, call me a hand-wringing wuss, but I've always felt a little uneasy about games in which you can beat up female characters, and I tend to subconsciously go 'easy' on them a bit. Until, that is, I noticed that one of the *Road Rash* girls has got the same name as my 'ex'. Suddenly, the game was transformed into an exercise in ferocious therapeutic psychodrama, as I vented my suppressed anger by knocking her silly with a truncheon, kicking her into trees, and belting her sideways into oncoming traffic, again and again and again. Every time she fell off, I stopped the bike and waited for her to catch up before unleashing yet more merciless punishment.

What she'd think if she could see me indulging in this sad virtual revenge is anyone's guess – but let's face it, she's probably too busy shagging her way through a long line of blokes who are better looking, richer, and more well-adjusted than me to even care. Still, I ain't missing her at all. Since she's been gone. Away. No, I ain't missing her at all. No matter what my friends say. (Have you been drinking? – Ed.)

Score

84

Burly. Surly. Gnarly. Harley.

Price: £34.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Tel: 01753 549 442

e-mail: <http://www.ea.com>

dan The People's Choice
Personal Computers



(Above Left) "Put that bloody stick down."

(Bottom left) VW camper action!

(Right) It's *CHiPs*... plus the other one.

AT BLOODY LAST, THIS 32-BIT update of the Mega Drive classic (having been available on the 3DO and Playstation for some time) finally puts in a long overdue appearance on the PC. And blow me off if it isn't a darn fine conversion too – smoother and faster than the others.

Aside from the new high-resolution option (which ran like a dream on the P133 I tested it on), it also finds room for the one option the console versions sorely lacked – a multi-player link-up mode. The game itself sees you donning leathers and competing in a series of illegal motorbike races across America. So far, so dull – but the main twist with *Road Rash* is that you can assault the other riders during the contest. Punch them in the face, kick them into the path of on-coming cars, smack them in



creatures

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Douglas Adams author of
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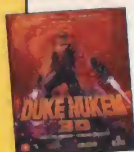
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Flight Sim 95

PC ZONE CLASSIC

WINDOWS 95

We asked Simon Bradley if he'd check out the latest incarnation in the best-selling *Flight Sim* series. Well, it seemed like a good idea at the time, what with him being a proper pilot and everything.

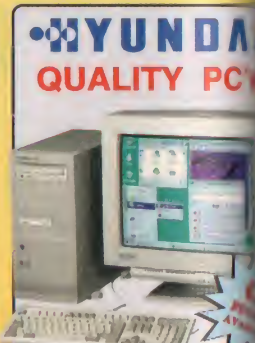
THE MICROSOFT FLIGHT SIMULATORS are the best-selling flight sims of all time. Now that doesn't really mean a whole lot, 'cos back in the '80s the Honda Superdream was the best selling bike, but it was crap. People bought it because it did everything they wanted adequately, and it started every time they pressed the button. What does this have to do with *Flight Sim 95*? Well, I make a living in the wacky and exciting world of computers, and that means that, like many of my peers, my feelings towards Microsoft are at best ambivalent and at worst positively hostile. You see, nobody



(Above) Now that's what I call a cockpit.

(Below) "Ere 'Chelle! Look at that great big plane up there, it looks like it's going to crash! Wait 'til I tell Arfur back at the Vic."

likes a smartarse, and that's the trouble with Microsoft. They're just so bloody good at everything that it gets really irritating after a while and that rather sums up their *Flight Simulator* series - annoyingly competent. FS95 is no exception. It does everything you could reasonably ask, and is the ideal way to get into flight sims if you don't want to shoot at anything. But is this enough? Read on, and I'll tell you.



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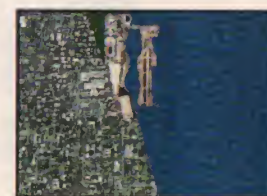
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ZONE



it is today. On the way, as mentioned earlier, it became the best selling flight sim of all time. By quite a long way. Now to be fair, that is partly because it gets bundled with the new machines sold these days. Nevertheless, it's still pretty impressive.

Duty frees

The latest incarnation - *Flight Sim 6* (or *Microsoft Flight Simulator for Windows 95* to give it its 'proper' title) - is a bang-up-to-date bells and whistles simulator. No surprises there. There is full sound support, pretty well any video mode you care to mention, and support for any joystick which Windows 95 is happy with. Superficially at least, it makes the grade without any problems. In fact, it looks quite stunning - check out the screen shots for yourself.

One good thing about Microsoft - they integrate their products properly. The installation routine is a breeze and there are no surprises lurking for the unwary traveller. At least not at first. As usual, you need to leave the CD in to run the game - try it without and it sulks. Which makes me wonder why you need 90MB of disk space as well...

In-flight movie

So what do you get for your dosh? Well, for a start, you get a CD. At this stage, I don't know what else, because the jury is still out on what will be printed and what will be on-line. But my money is



(Above) "Blimey! Old Heseltine's company car gets more extravagant every year!"

(Left) The Extra stunt plane, or 'vomit plane' as it's more commonly known.

(Left) Feel free as a bird high above the clouds in your little Cessna.

(Below) "Ere Reg. I think we're about to run out of runway!"

In Perspective

A bit of a tricky comparison, this one.

Flight Unlimited

Flight Simulator 5

Flight Simulator 95

Marine Fighters ('cos it's a got Hercules in it)

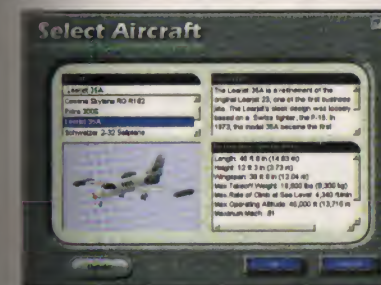
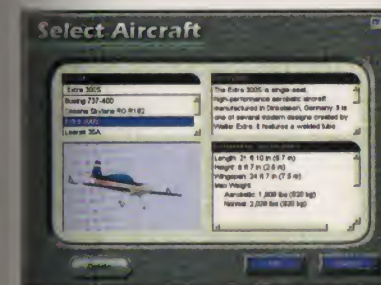
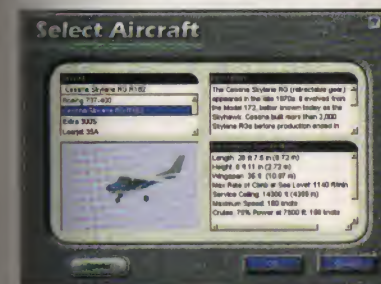
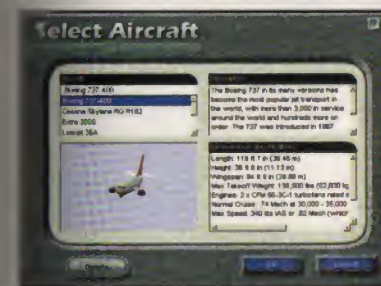
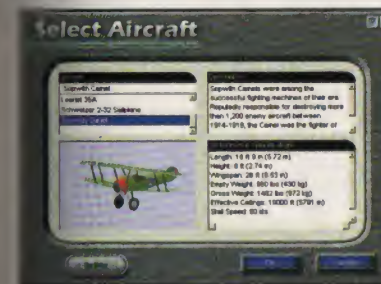
on a lightweight box, lots of dire licence and copyright warnings and the CD with everything else there. But don't worry - the on-line help is very good. You get the typical polished Microsoft installation routine and the sure and certain knowledge that the product will work with Windows 95 and probably perform okay as well. But more on that later....

So. You've installed it. You've set up your controls, preferences and so on. You've hit the button marked Fly Now! There will be a short delay before normal service is resumed - probably only a few seconds, and then there you'll be, in whatever glorious detail you've selected, on the threshold at Chicago O'Hare airport in a Cessna 185. Familiar? You bet. From here on in, if you have ever seen a release of *Flight Simulator*, then you'll know the score. Controls are the same. Key presses are the same. The flight model is pretty much the same. Is that a bad thing? Not necessarily. After all, I haven't heard too many complaints about the way that FS handles, and on the basis that if it ain't broke don't fix it, Microsoft have done the smart thing and left well alone.

Of course, no new release would be a new release without new features. In this case, allow me to introduce you to a couple of new aircraft. On the left, looking sort of shiny and cute, is the Extra 300s - beloved of anyone who has tried *Flight Unlimited* as being the easiest thing there not to kill yourself in. On the right, looking sort of shiny and, well, bulbous actually, is the Boeing 737-400. Yes, that's right. You went in



going to Lanzagrotty, and now you can pretend to be Captain Clueless and see if you too can bounce so hard that the in-flight meals go from omelettes to soufflés in one fell swoop.



(Right) General aircraft detailing is very high, even if the landscape isn't. But who cares about detailed ground texture maps when you're whizzing through the air in a Lear jet at 10,000 feet?

Reheated breakfast

But there's more. Oh yes, there's more. Take a look at the screen shots to see how much more. No longer do you need to buy third-party add-ons to get decent graphics. Now you can fly over Detroit and see the queues of broken down North West Airlines DC-10s waiting to fly to Gatwick (not that I'm bitter or anything), you can fly over Paris and almost smell the garlic. Heck, you can even cross the Channel and pop into Heathrow if you want - and most important of all, it is quite possible to navigate your way by reference to the scenery. You can call me Mr Sad if you wish, (We do already

(Left) There are now six wonderfully modelled aircraft to choose from, including the Camel and 737; each with accurate flight models and official blurb.

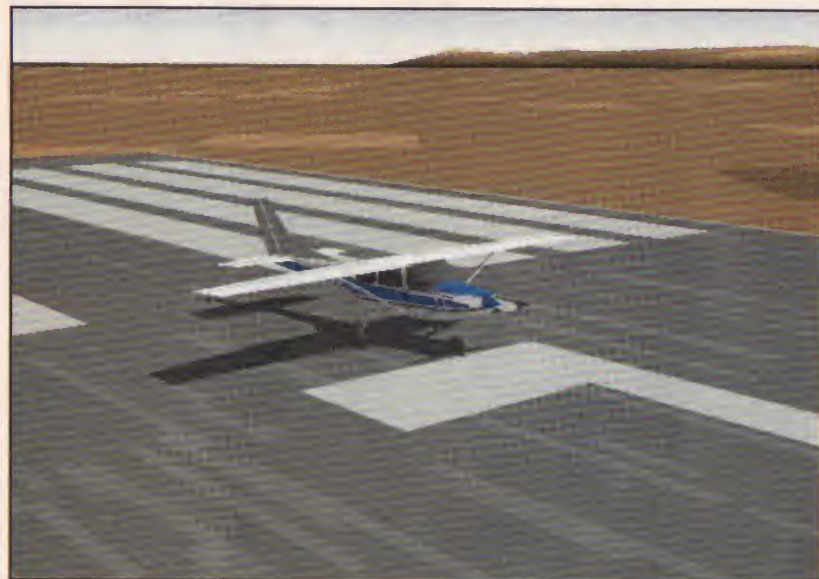
(Below) You can switch views and even aircraft during flight(!) to make things more interesting.



don't we? - Ed.) but to prove a point I took my Learjet (hey, I can dream, can't I?) out from Charles de Gaulle in Paris, set a course of 340°, crossed the French coast somewhere in Normandy, crossed the British coast around Brighton, flew North up the M23, past Gatwick, across the M25, into London, turned left at the Thames and crashed just short of Heathrow's runway 25L. By this time it was early in the morning, you see, and I was somewhat bleary-eyed and not a little fed up with the journey. But more on this phenomenon later. Anyway, the point is that you really can navigate using no more than your Family Atlas, a compass and a lot of patience. Unless it gets dark, of course, in which case you're just a little buggered. Although of course you can still fall back on the VOR/DME which, if you've read the manual and if you know the frequencies will give you a perfect position fix every time. And a course. But those are big 'ifs'.

The last version of *Flight Simulator* I experienced was somewhat challenged when it came to weather. Basically, there was either an awful lot (the ping pong ball effect) or there was none at all. This is no longer a problem. You don't get the wacky fluffy clouds which some of the very latest offerings present, but what you do get is the facility to totally customise your





weather. And pretty good it looks too, although when you actually get up to a cloud you can see that in fact it's squarer than it looks from a distance. But now I'm nitpicking. You want rain? Okay. How about fog? You got it. Thunder and lightning? You bet. Wild crosswinds? No problemo. Hey, you could even combine all of them, just to see how good you are. Well, do ya feel lucky, punk?

So, what do we have in total? Well, you get six aircraft – the ubiquitous Cessna, the original Camel, the luxurious Learjet, the hooligan Extra, the silent Schweitzer sailplane and the ludicrous 737. You get weather. Lots of it. You get scenery, again lots of it. Detailed too. You get a pretty good flight model – I've flown Cessnas, Schweitzers and a 737 (yes, really) and this is actually quite good. What you don't get is anything to shoot at, although some of the preset 'adventure' flights included are actually quite good for adrenaline flow.

Short finals

A word about frame rate and processor power. This needs Windows 95, so don't try it on your 386, children. But be prepared for a shock. On max everything, it still runs okay on a P133 with lots of RAM and a decent video card. Basically, go with the setting it suggests for detail and display, and you'll be fine regardless of what you are running on. Which makes a change these days. Out of interest, just try running *Flight Sim 5* on a Pentium and watch it fly (ahem!).

In customs

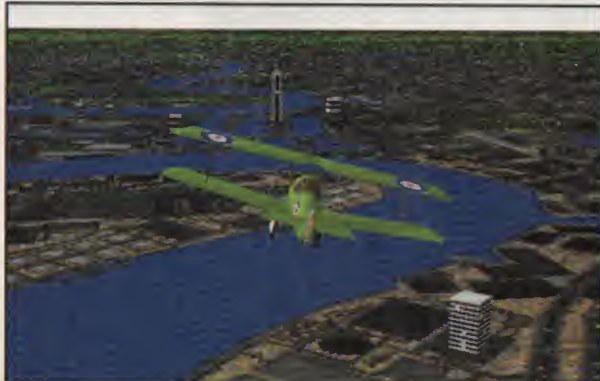
I really didn't expect to like this at all. Although I genuinely get excited by flight (yeah, I know, sad bloke), and love aircraft, I tend towards the opinion that if I want to fly from London to Glasgow in real-time then I may as well do it for real, watch a movie, get some free nibbles, see Glasgow (!) and have a bit



(Above left) If you can't fly, then get the on-board instructor to teach you.



(Left) Clouds and weather are now much better implemented.



(Below) Oh for a machine gun and a couple of sticks of dynamite!



Duncan's view

Er, I always find these *Microsoft Flight Sim* doofers hard to 'judge' fairly. They do what they 'do' excellently, but the point is whether or not you, the player, want to join in: as Simon said, rather than 'pretend' to fly in real-time from London to Glasgow, you'd be better off doing it for real. (Then again, if you did that you'd actually find yourself in Glasgow, so maybe it is best to pretend.) It's all bordering on the edge of sad cliff though, at the end of the day. You know? And I hate the silly keyboard commands, and the poncey, confusing and ugly Windows stuff. And the graphics, these days, aren't exactly 'cutting edge'. Mind you, they do have their moments – apart from when you crash, and that just looks downright stupid! (Still, the kind of people *FS95* is aimed at will probably never crash, and so will never know.) For my part I reckon Simon's been a bit over-generous with the score. Having said that, however, I can't think of another game that allows you to literally install the whole world on your hard-drive, so maybe he hasn't. Erm...

of a life rather than sit in front of the PC and do it 'virtually'. Having said that, though, I was pleasantly surprised by the depth of this sim. You really can get quite into it, and immerse yourself in the experience. Then suddenly it's mid-night. Or dawn. It just depends on how far you're flying and what you want to do.

Would I buy it? To be honest, yes I would, because although this is not the type of flight sim I would normally play around with (I like shooting things you see), I found myself hopelessly addicted to the thing despite myself. Lots of other folks will buy it too, and not just because it comes from Microsoft either. It really is rather good. It looks nice. It flies well. It even sounds good. And, being objective, you can't really ask much more than that, can you? **Z**

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb (16Mb pref)
Processor: 486DX/33 (P75 recommended)
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: Sound Blaster, Ad-Lib, Roland
Controls: Joystick, Rudders, Mouse, Keyboard

Score

95

It's really rather good.

Price: £49.99 **Release Date:** TBC
Publisher: Microsoft
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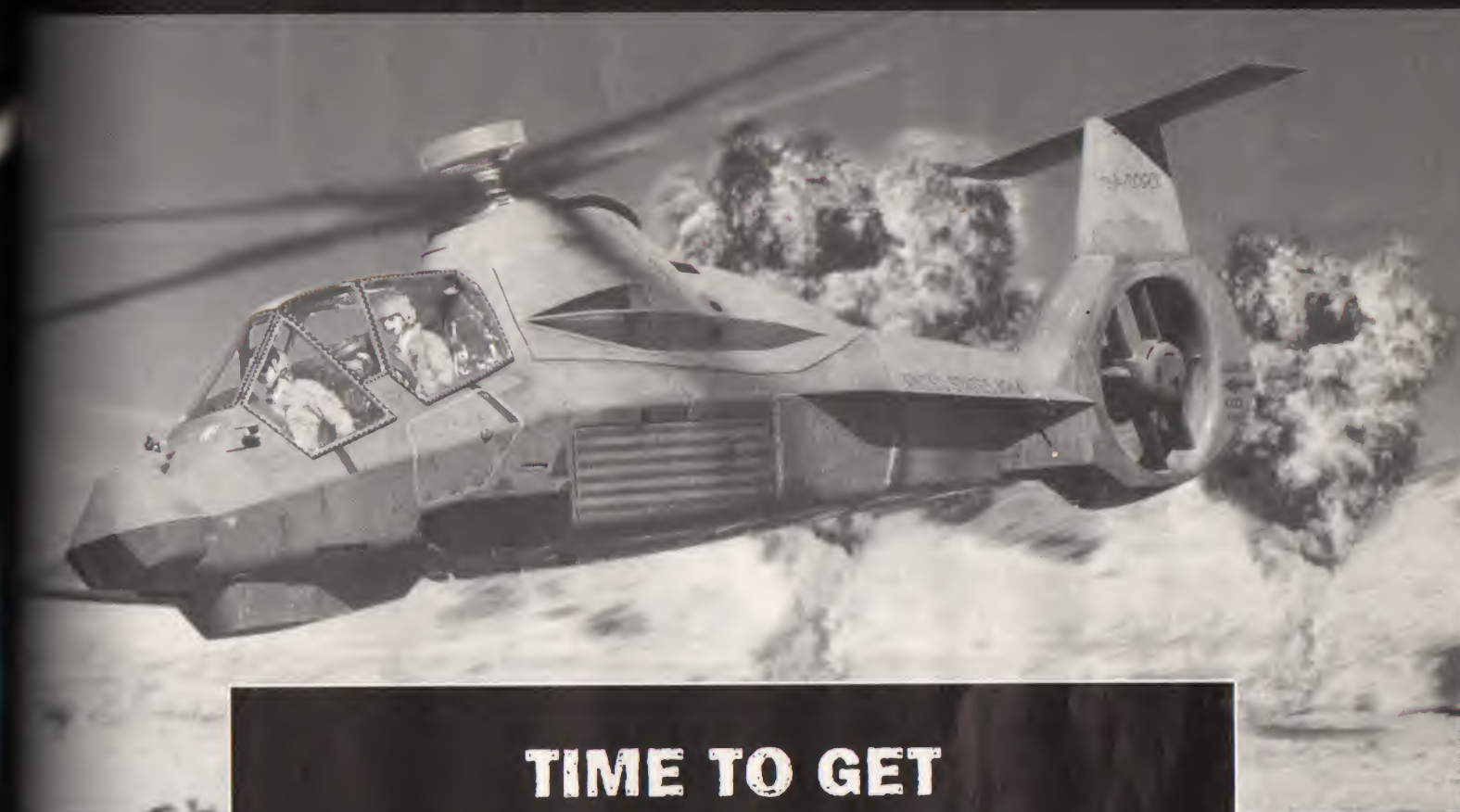
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We originally gave this game to David Coulthard to review, but he kept spinning the mouse off the mouse mat. Duncan MacDonald had to take over, and frankly he's not much better...

F1 Manager



Then it gets hard

You're in an office – a static screen – and just about anywhere you point to with the mouse offers up a 'hotspot'. Click on it and off you're whisked, to another static screen, which, in turn, has further hotspots. And so on. All you really want to do is buy a car and go to a race, but you're stuck in a mind loop. Time to read the manual.

Two days later...

Now you can navigate deftly through the 'suiy' part of the game: balance sheets, regulations, dates, banks, sponsors, contracts, statistics, negotiations, merchandising, and so on. Then it's time to put on the overalls (hoorah) and zip through R&D, design, production, assembly and the like. Finally (like a year later) you can actually go and race.

In-car views, trackside cameras, and on and on. Send your cars out to test, bring them back in, fiddle with fuel, wings and even parts and then send them out again. Then comes qualifying day... be careful with fuel loads, and maybe even use that special 'qualifying engine' you put together back home. (So what if it's knackered after 12 laps?). Then, as long as you've got your cars back together in time, it's time for the Big Day: watch your bitmapped vehicles zooming round the vectored track from several viewpoints, in real-time. (Or, indeed, from a speeded-up crap-o-map doofer, should you become bored). You can do your own pitstops, incidentally, with the mouse pointer. Win or lose, however, and it's time to return to home base: hot-spot city. 'Suit' mode. 'Overalls' mode. 'Suit' mode again. Etc.

How can I cram this in?

Erm, there's so much more to say. I'd better quickly add, then, that an important part of *F1 Manager* is the 'pseudo CAD' screen. Design your own car parts, basically (sort of). And then, um, er... actually I'm really confused to be honest. All the F1 management games to date have been confusing, and this one is no exception. The emphasis, for me, seems a little too orientated on the 'resources' side of things. I can do without that crap, personally, but maybe that's just me. *F1 Manager* is, however, beautifully put together, which augers well for the interior workings of the code.



You know? Put it like this: my drivers are doing terribly and my office staff are really pissed off, yet I have to assume the problem is due to my pathetic management skills rather than the game itself. In other words I'm crap, and it isn't. Or I hope it isn't, especially as I'm about to make it a 'benchmark'. I'll confidently state that *F1 Manager* is the best of the genre to date – no problems there – but as to whether it'll remain as such for ages, I'm not so sure. **Z**

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486/66
Graphics: SVGA/Vesa compatible driver
Sound: SoundBlaster
Controls: Mouse, keyboard

Score

89

If this was a torture machine it'd be called the 'confuse-o-tron'. It's pretty skill, though, even if it is a German product. (The bastards.)

Price: £39.99 Release Date: Out now
Publisher: Europress
Tel: 01625 859 444

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Personal Computers

(Above) Getting your car set-up right is dead important. Just ask the Arrows team.

(Above right) If your drivers ask for too much money, then sack them. It's the car that wins you races not the driver. Erm... No! I think you're wrong there.



I WANT TO GET INTO THIS REVIEW AS quickly as possible, because there's so much to say. Nevertheless, I must share with you a snippet of conversation overheard on a bus, a few days after it was announced that Damon Hill's contract wasn't going to be renewed...

London bloke: I reckon 'e should of told 'em 'e weren't gonna do no more races.

Scottish bloke: Uh? Wha? Who? Frunk Williams?

London bloke: Naaah, Damien, Damien. I reckon 'e should of left straight off an' set up his own team. That would of done 'im praaad ('Proud' – Ed.) 'E could of beaten 'em all!

Scottish bloke: Aye, bu' heed huv tae buy humsel' a car, wouldnae-ee! Un' there's tha mechanics, tae!

London bloke: So wot? 'E's a millionaire, innit. Woss yor problem?

Oh, were life so simple. Unfortunately it's not. And neither is *F1 Manager*.

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(Left) You can view the race from numerous trackside cameras. This makes it a bit more interesting than the other F1 management games.

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CHARYBDIS
ENTERTAINMENT, INC.



For PC (Windows™ 95)

REVIEW

Privateer 2: The Darkening



All good things come to an end, even the long-running *Wing Commander* versus *X-Wing* debate, at least as far as **Chris Anderson** is concerned.

LET'S GET A COUPLE OF THINGS straight before this review commences proper. I am sure you will all be amazed to learn that *Privateer 2* is the sequel to *Privateer 1*. (No - Ed.) *Privateer 1* used the *Wing Commander* game engine (and had some trading bits in as well). There are lots of people out there who get violently sick if you are stupid enough to say the words 'Wing Commander' in their presence. So soon as they recover from their

involuntary vom-fest they will then start bombarding you with reasons why *X-Wing* is soooo much better until eventually you want to smash their faces in. Thankfully, I am now in a position to unite both sides of this silly argument during the course of this review. How do I intend to perform this miracle? Well, actually, I don't have to do much at all, because those lovely people at Electronic Arts have brought a brand new team of programmers on board for *The Darkening*, all of whom are big *X-Wing* fans (cue thousands of *X-wing* fans applauding 'til their little hands fall off, bless 'em).

As you would expect, the aforementioned programming bods have brought their love of the *X-Wing* games with them. The upshot of all this is *The Darkening* now has combat scenes that have more in common with *X-Wing* than the original *Wing Commander* game, yet still retain enough of their own identity to set them apart from *X-Wing*. (Thank God he put that bit in - PC Zone lawyers.) Actually, that last bit is not as much of a cop-out as it may sound, because



(Above & right) *The Darkening* is a bit of a graphical feast, innit?





(Above) All the menus and interfaces are pretty smart. In fact, they ooze gloss.



(Left) Got 'im! Nasty big alien bast!



Bye bye bitmaps

Duncan McDonald was looking over my shoulder as I was playing *The Darkening*. He took one look at the game and the first thing he said was "They've got rid of those bloody bitmappy ships at last" or words to that effect. Every single ship in *The Darkening* universe (and there are loads) is a gorgeous-looking creation which has



been lovingly designed on the planet Polygon. Out are bitmaps, in are polygons, praise be the Lord and all that happy horseshit. It is generally agreed by all in the PC Zone office that this game is the most visually impressive thing we have

In Perspective

As you can see from the chart below, *The Darkening* is the new game to be reckoned with as far as space combat sims go. Unlike *X-Wing*, which is the new game *not* to be reckoned with (snigger).

The Darkening

Privateer

WCIV

X-Wing

seen in ages. Check out the screenshot and you will see what I mean: sexy polygonised ships in a lovely dark and surreal universe populated by...

(Er, I think we get the gist - Ed) What you won't get from the screenshots is how amazing

everything looks when it's moving around. Take it from me, it's fab. So, no probs on the presentation front, what about the rest of it? Come on kiddies, it's time to have a look at the game...

It's bigger, it's better, it's...

...er, a bit like *Privateer 1* actually, except as I said, everything in the game has been given an overhaul. The graphics are gorgeous, the combat's fantastic - you really feel as though you're 'out there' in space shooting it out with pirates and other such baddies. The special effects are truly awesome too: the light-sourcing effects as you blast enemy ships are mind-blowing, and scarily realistic lens-flare effects add considerably to the atmosphere.

As I've said though, the basic premise of the game is the same as it was the first time around: you play a lone desperado who tries to make an honest (or dishonest) living out of either trading or beating the crap out of everyone for lots of cash. Both of these paths are equally satisfying, though I would like to point out that if you're whizzing around the galaxy doing nothing other than 'trading your wares' for profit, you are likely to be called a bloody big wuss by daring, dashing, trouble-making space bods like myself. But don't let that put you off, eh?



If you've played any of the *Elite* games, you'll pretty much know the score with this kind of game: buy a ship (which is crap to start with), do some trading, make on a few easy missions, make some cash, buy a new ship, and then go through the whole rigmarole all over again, at the same time gaining a reputation for yourself as a 'well-lard' dude, so you can charge more money for your future exploits. In *The Darkening*, you can do all these things. However, if you're the type of chap (or chapess) who likes a bit of purpose to their inter-galactic comings and goings, you might want to get involved in the 'big plot'.

The big what?

The plot, morons, didn't you know that all these 'epic' space combat things have to have a big plot? Well anyway, *The Darkening's* got one and bloody good it is too (see separate panel). To get yourself involved in the big plot, you need to speak to a certain character at the beginning of the game. If you don't know who he is, then you'll be stuffed as far as the plot's concerned, except you won't because I'm going to tell you who he is. I'm good like that. Check out Public Records in the Booth at the beginning of the game and find a record pertaining to Dr Loomis. He's



Wheeling and dealing

Each planet has a Booth, which you can pop into and buy and sell commodities, purchase a new ship, upgrade your weapons, and get info on people, places, and companies from the Public Records. Pay special attention to the Public Records, as info here points you in the right direction if you're following the 'big plot'.

WHO, WHY, WHERE, WHAT?

The object of the game is to find out who you are. It's not like you've forgotten or anything, it's just that your ship has crash-landed at a space-station, you've gone into a coma, and when you wake up you have no clue who you are anymore. Except you know your name is Ser Lev Axis. All the blokes in the game are called Ser something, it's sort of futuristic-speak for 'mister'. And all the women are called Senu something, it's like 'missus'. I'm sure you can see the pattern that's developing here. Anyway, the idea is that you follow all the clues about your ill-fated space-ship and you'll find out who you are, what you've done, and all kinds of other interesting things like that.



the bloke you want. Then pop off to see him at Crius and hey presto you're sorted - you've done it, you're in the big plot. This will take you off on an

(Left) This is your interstellar map. Don't worry if you break down, just ring the Intergalactic AA and they'll turn up in a yellow space ship and sort you out.

(Below left) The game is full of interestin' characters to befriend and stitch up.

incredibly interesting adventure which you can follow for the whole game and see through to its natural conclusion. Am I good to you lot or what?

In conclusion

The Darkening is by far and away the best space combat sim ever to grace the PC. The graphics are jaw-droppingly gorgeous, the action's fast, furious and bloody satisfying, the plot's rich and beautifully told, the acting's impressive for the most part, and basically the experience is quite breath-taking. Oh yeah, and it pisses all over *X-Wing*. What more can I say? Buy it. Buy it now. **Z**

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb RAM
Processor: P75 (P100 recommended)
Graphics: VGA/SVGA
Sound: SoundBlaster
Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Score

94

Not only outrageously good-looking, but also incredibly addictive to boot.

Price: £TBC Release Date: Out now
Publisher: EA
Tel: 01753 549442

dan The People's Choice
Personal Computers

(Left) Super detailed hi-res graphics mean its *Privateer*: The Jerking on anything less than a beefy Pentium when the on-screen action heats up.

Movie madness?

EA spent five million dollars on this game, and most of it went on producing the interactive movie bits that pop up everywhere to impress you or take you on to the next bit of the plot. We went on and on about this in *The Darkening* supplement we ran last issue, enthusing wildly about how cool it was probably going to be. Well, I'm not going to repeat everything here, but let's just say that as far as I'm concerned it was money well spent. The story-line is damned engrossing, which of course is no less than you would expect from an Origin game, and the acting is of a very high standard throughout. Well okay, some of the scenes are a bit cheesy but then that sort of adds to the movie-like feel of the whole thing, doesn't it? (Nu - Ed.) Shut up, I like it. It's got Christopher Walken in it, and Clive Owen, and Matilda May, and David Warner, and bloody loads of other famous people too. At the end of the day, it's going to come down to personal taste as to whether you like the movie sections of the game or not. Some people are bound to say "bloody hell they spent all that money on those crap movie bits". Well look at it this way: the actual in-game parts of *The Darkening* are f***ing brilliant, and if you like the movie bits too, it's an unexpected bonus, non? So cynics be silent and accept *The Darkening* for what it is: a superb action game with 'optional cinematic entertainment' thrown in for free. I'm glad we've settled that.



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Charlie Brooker once had sex with a mule. This makes him the ideal choice to review *Gene Wars*. Apparently.

Gene Wars



YES I DID. REALLY. HONESTLY. I HAD sex with a mule. Several mules, in fact. But it's okay – I did it for the good of mankind. It was part of a genetics experiment. There was this bunch of scientists, see, and they wanted to breed this sort of mule-human hybrid. My job was to go down to the fields and try to entice the mules back to a special 'love nest' they'd constructed for me in their laboratory. Have you ever tried chatting up a mule? Let me tell you, it isn't easy. There aren't many suggestive conversational gambits which revolve around eating grass or having a tail, and if you start coming on too strong they just gallop away, leaving you forlorn and alone in the moonlight. And despite what that Toyah Wilcox says on her sex programme thing, mules are not good lovers. They're distant and uncommunicative, and to be quite frank, entirely selfish whenever things

get physical. Anyway, I jacked it all in when I discovered that the scientists had set up a hidden camera in the room and were broadcasting the entire proceedings (complete with a 'zany' musical soundtrack) nightly via satellite onto Spanish national television, where apparently I was known as 'Señor Mule-o Bumba' and was developing quite a following.

But I digress. I'm not just wittering on about mules, sex and genetic experiments because I wanted to write a spurious and offensive opening paragraph (I was going to do that anyway), no – I'm mentioning these things because they're all part and parcel of *Gene Wars*, the new action strategy game from Bullfrog. Now this is a bit of a high-concept product here, so pin your lugholes back and put your very best 'understanding' hat on as I explain just what on earth the game is about. As game plots go, this is probably the most interesting one you'll ever hear (not the most enticing come-on, I know – but bear with me)...

Short Sharp Shock

Okay. We're humans, right, and we've gone out and explored space and discovered that – shock horror – we are not alone. There are other lifeforms in the galaxy. Intelligent lifeforms which are more or less on a par with us.



(Above) A 'biozone'. You'll need to fill this area with lifeforms to please the Ethereals. That's one of them there – looking a lot like Casper The Friendly Ghost.

(Left) A blossoming base. Note British-style workmen, standing around doing sod all.

(Far bottom left) The team touch down on a virgin planet.

(Below) Suck up to the Ethereals enough and they'll place a monolith near your base. Any creatures or specialists touching it will be blessed with 'special powers'.

Anyway, after an initial period of nervy introductions and much conjecture over which race had the biggest genitals, we (and they) gave in to our basest instincts and started an all-out intergalactic, inter-species war. And a very destructive war it was too, with bountiful, beautiful planets being burnt to cinders all over the shop.

This mass destruction soon attracted the attention of the Ethereals, an ancient race of weird beings with awesome, God-like powers. They'd built the galaxy billions and billions of years ago and were none too impressed with the way we'd vandalised it. Using their omnipotent powers, they punished the guilty parties (ie us and the other races) by forcing them to take part in a sort of universal community service programme – to visit barren planets and turn them back into lush green hives of biological wonderment again. Planting trees, breeding animals,



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balancing the food chain that sort of thing. So far, so good. Then our new masters decided to introduce a bit of competition. They split us into teams and told us that whichever group proved to be most efficient would receive a prize. And the rest? They'd have their brains fried.

Which is where the game comes in...

Absolutely. Because we all know that the best way to win is to play dirty. But unfortunately, the Ethereals won't let you. You're not allowed to commit acts of violence or cunning sabotage. If they spot you doing anything bad, they'll penalise you. Because you should know better.

Yes... you should know better. But as for dumb animals... they're different. If you breed a gigantic great crab, and it wanders off and snips an opponent's head off with its pincers, that's not your fault. And if your pack of little donkeys, bred accidentally back at the lab, goes and eats your opponent's freshly-planted forest, well, it's just nature's way, isn't it? Likewise, if - in the name of research - you happen to breed an entirely new species of animal, and it turns out to be unbelievably violent and easily led, shucks, that's evolution. Right?

Starting to get the picture? It's *Command & Conquer* meets *Sim Life*, basically. Loads of resource management (with a distinctly eco-friendly bent) and loads of real-time war strategy (with a distinctly eco-unfriendly bent). Aside from the gene-shuffling twist, there's another novel idea here - the Ethereals themselves show up periodically throughout each level, observing the action for themselves and keeping an eye out for any wrong-doing. Whenever



(Above) You'll need to plant acres of forest near your base. Not only does it provide food for the beasties, it can also be recycled and used for villainous purposes.

(Above right) At the end of each level you're handed this 'ready reckoner' so you can see exactly how well (or not) you've done.

(Below) Like *C&C*, the landscape is 'drawn in' as you venture out into it. Adds to the suspense, doesn't it?



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX66

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse

they're around, you'll have to be on your best behaviour. As soon as they've bugged off again, anything goes. It's rather like trying to pass rude notes around at the back of the maths class every time Mr Steelnuts turns his back.

It's anything but simple. There's an unbelievable amount of things to try and keep track of - from what type of seeds your botanist is carrying to whether or not your mules feel like mating with your frogs - not to mention the fact that your opponents tend to be both ruthless and uncommonly alert. It's rather like playing *C&C*, *Theme Park*, and *Sim Earth*, all at once. Against a complete bastard. At first, the sheer number of decisions that need making all at the same time is frustrating, annoying even - especially since the learning curve suddenly turns into a sheer rock face somewhere around level five. But persevere and you'll find that

its worth it. I'm finding it incredibly tough, but I can't help going back for more. *Z* took *Command & Conquer*, speeded up its action segments and simplified the resource management. *Gene Wars* kicks both elements into overdrive. Get the picture?

Good Game, Good Game

Not that I'm saying it's a *C&C* beater, however. This game isn't going to be everybody's cup of tea, simply because it's so frenetically complicated. If you've read thus far, and you're thinking "I like the sound of that", then rest assured - you'll love it. Those of you who prefer their games a tad more neanderthal had better leave it alone. It might piss you off and then you'd want to swing a club at it or something.

Oh, and by the way. The presentation, graphics, animation, and sound effects (a sort of hallucinatory blend of *Fraggle Rock* and '50s sci-fi) are by far and away the best I've ever seen or heard in a game of this type. And yes, there is a multi-player mode. Just thought I'd mention it. **Z**

Score

91

Tough, complex, involving... and completely off its tits.

Price: £39.99 Release Date: October
Publisher: EA/Bullfrog
Tel: 01753 549442

dan The People's Choice
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Sally Smith

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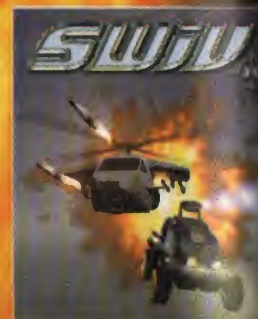
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PICK 'N' MIX

PICK N MIX

After a month away, the Pick 'N' Mix section returns. Those of you familiar with this part of the mag will know that usually it's crammed to bursting point with uninspiring B-list releases. This month, however, things are different. Why? Because this month's selection is actually rather good. Excellent news for everyone except **Charlie Brooker**, who was looking forward to slagging a few things off.

MONSTER TRUCK MADNESS



Plenty of monster-squashed flies on the windscreen.

IN WHICH MICROSOFT, THE PEOPLE WHO THRILLED you with Excel v4.3, Word 6.0, and the spine-tingling Access Developer's Kit bring you the next logical addition to their range: a monster truck racing simulator. In case you're unaware exactly what monster truck racing is, allow me to explain. Sadly there aren't any actual monsters in it, just trucks with absurdly large wheels. They drive around a course

comprised almost entirely of obstacles (mud pits, ramps, haybales etc), trying to ram their opponents off the road at the same time. It's the spectator sport of choice for men who drink beer, have a large gut, a checked shirt and a dusty old baseball cap, shout "yee-haw" a lot, and are married to their own sister. You know the type. Red-necked hicks.

Anyway, this computerised version is startlingly good entertainment. Part *Stunt Car Racer* and part *Nascar Racing*, it's blessed with impressive visuals, loads of 3D polygons being thrown around efficiently, trucks that are fun to drive, and several well thought-out courses. The three or four of you with 3D accelerator cards are catered for too (thanks to the Direct 3D support). And it doesn't end there, because network play is also supported – and it's no doubt a bloody good laugh, too. In fact, I can only think of one main drawback to the game: the commentator is an absolute tosser (although you can always switch him off).

Overall it's robust, amiable, undemanding fun – just the sort of thing to take your mind off things during a marathon Excel spreadsheet-editing session. If you're



Citroen finally solve the problem of the 2CV tipping on bends.

looking for proof that Microsoft's gaming division are beginning to get their act together, look no further.

Publisher: Microsoft
Tel: 01734 270001
Internet: www.microsoft.com
Price: £44.99
Note: Windows 95 required

SCORE: 78

INSIDE INDEPENDENCE DAY

SPACE INVADERS: THE MOVIE (AKA *ID4*) HAS been playing in every cinema on the planet for long enough now, so the chances are you've seen it at least once already. Assuming you have an appetite for cheeseball (yet admittedly tongue-in-cheek) gung-ho Americanisms, it's a great film, but one that's been

rammed down our throats, hype-wise, since it arrived. Furthermore, at the time of writing, it's impossible to switch on Sky Movies, ITV, or The Sci-Fi Channel without being confronted by countless plugs, clips, and exclusive interviews with the stars. I don't know about you, but if I see that footage of the White House exploding one more bloody time, I'm going to go round to 20th Century Fox headquarters and make their vision a very bloody reality.

Inside Independence Day is a loathsome and cynical piece of back-slapping Hollywood masturbation designed to cheat gullible sci-fi diehards out of the few pennies they have left (having already forked out for a whole range of shoddy spin-off material, from *ID4* T-shirts to personal colonic irrigation kits with Will Smith's grinning face on the cover). Not only is this insulting (it has the audacity to feature adverts for the dull-looking *ID4* game), it's also shamefully amateurish in places – the amount of background noise during the interviews (ie shameless plugs) being a case in point. You know those 15-mile wide spaceships that hover



Looks like Hilary's been serving beans again!

around in the movie? Well, I hope one of them flies up the arse of whichever greed-mongering corporate boy wonder commissioned this hateful chunk of sour, stale, shit-encrusted garbage.

Publisher: EA
Tel: 01753 549442
Price: TBC
Note: Windows 3.1/95, sound card required

SCORE: 0



Should have stuck to the Holsten Pils ads, Jeff.

MUPPET TREASURE ISLAND



Burning off the excess methane creates a handy light source.

THE BIG MUPPETS COMEBACK CONTINUES with this point-and-click adaptation of their latest cinematic escapade. Its fair to say this is aimed squarely at young children and it's an immaculately designed slice of silliness which should have the little ones gurgling with joy within seconds.

The blend of integrated video and sumptuous hand-drawn backgrounds is altogether seamless, as Kermit, Fozzie, Gonzo and all the old favourites mug their way through easy-to-follow adventure sequences and quirkily humorous subgames; my favourite is the one which involves hurling gigantic fruit pies at the pirates. Billy Connolly even puts in a guest appearance and manages not to swear.

The one and only drawback is that game-wise it really is too simple for adults to play through, although having said that, it held my attention for ages (I even went back to do some of the games for a second time, sad sod that I am). Ultimately, *Muppet Treasure Island* is perfect for introducing the little ones to the life-enhancing joy of computer games, though. If you've got children, they may well grow up hating your guts unless you buy it for them. If you haven't got children, try and borrow some or, better still, start shagging now until you've got an excuse to bring home a copy. Got that?



The Swedish chef's new line in dill and herring pizza.

Publisher: Activision
Tel: 0181-742 9400
Price: £34.99
Note: Windows 95 required

SCORE: 80

SANTA FE MYSTERIES: THE ELK MOON MURDER

SUPERIOR MULTIMEDIA MURDER-MYSTERY FUN from Activision. Some old bint's been shot in the head and it's down to you to bring her killer to justice and clean the carpet up afterwards. Which means interviewing suspects, collating evidence, and generally coming over all Angela Lansbury (I had to be careful how I put that).



Lots of Native Americans and, er, Amanda Donohoe.

Amanda Donohoe pops up briefly and for once doesn't shed her clothes like autumn leaves. The review copy I was sent had the original American packaging which features a warning about "clothed sexual touching" on the front; an excellent enticement to purchase, and a good name for a band, too.

Anyway, although not a patch on *The Pandora Directive*, it's polished, professional, and fairly good fun, even if it does tend to lead you by the nose a bit; the fact that it's centred around the Native American community makes things a little more interesting too. Crime fiction fans who fancy getting on a Poirot trip could do far worse, in other words.



Anyone with a taste in jewellery like that deserves to die.

Publisher: Activision
Tel: 0181-742 9400
Price: £29.99
Note: Windows 95/DOS required; 16-bit sound card required.

SCORE: 72

CRUSADER: NO REGRET



Regrettably similar to *No Remorse*.

BEING, OBVIOUSLY, A SEQUEL TO *CRUSADER: No Remorse*. Since the words 'regret' and 'remorse' mean virtually the same thing, it's no great surprise to learn that this is almost the same game; a sort of real-time take on the *X:Com* games

(although nowhere near as good), starring a mercenary in a funky red combat suit with a nice line in Bodie-and-Doyle style rolling moves.

Now, thrill junkie that I am, I was really quite enamoured with the first *Crusader* game. Perhaps, in hindsight (having re-read my review of the time), over-enamoured but I don't have any desire to play the whole thing over again; especially since nowadays there are several similar, yet far superior games on the market (such as *Gender Wars*, *Syndicate Wars*, or *Bedlam*). In fact, aside from a few new animation routines (and the level layout), this sequel is so flatly similar to the original that it's really more akin to a bunch of data-disk add-on levels, and as such is of interest only to Origin completists (or, of course, Origin's financial department). Not very interesting at all, in other words. Wait for *X:Com Apocalypse*, instead - that's my advice, mate.

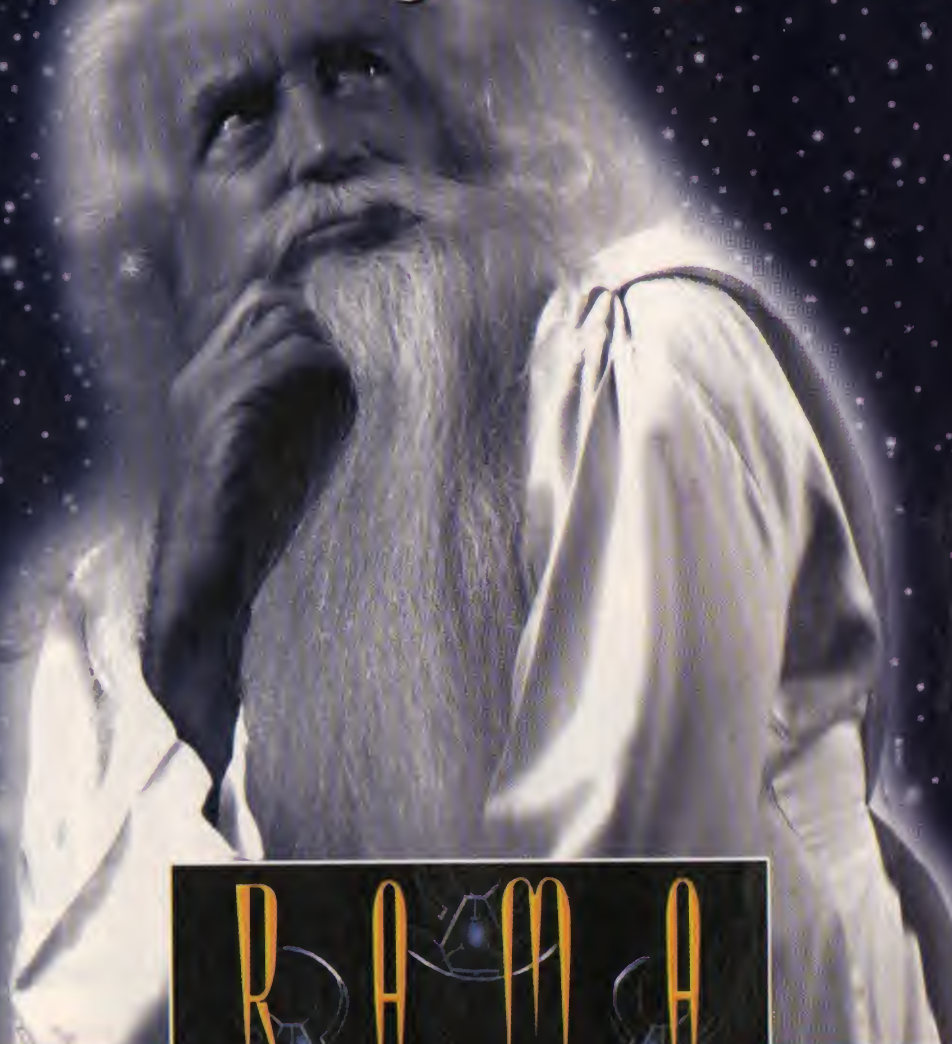


Not very interesting except for the funky red combat suits.

Publisher: EA/Origin
Tel: 01753 549442
Internet: www.ea.com
Price: TBC

SCORE: 60

IT throws up so many questions that even the most convinced people are beginning to doubt.



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Budget Games

(cut here for free badge!)

It's here! *Quake*! *Quake's* out on budget! The full game for only £4.99!! ...Not really. But here are a load of compilations from Telstar, instead. You know you want them.

Theme Park/Strike Commander



Get your own back on fat screaming kids.

THEME PARK IS THE ONLY game that ever gave you the chance to do all the things that real theme park owners do: design and build scary rides; hire people to die of heart attacks from walking about in chicken suits in 120° heat; put excess salt in your chips to make people thirsty; sell them extortionately priced drinks to quench it; make children vomit; play the stock market; take over the world.

Very strangely it's been matched with *Strike Commander*, a futuristic flight sim high in gung-ho values that had

good bits (cinematic sequences, good graphics and sound, varied missions) and less good bits (the flight model and running speed, although admittedly the speed should no longer be a problem on today's powerful Pentiums). Still, you have to question whether a die-hard strategy fan will be interested in messing with a two-year old flight sim. Who exactly are these packs aimed at?

Publisher: Telstar

Price: £19.99

SCORE: 70



It's not *EF2000*, but hey, it's cheap.

Hi-Octane/Wing Commander II



Bullfrog lost the plot a bit with this one.

HI-OCTANE IS THE ONLY Bullfrog game not to hit the punters like a head-on collision between a supertanker and Russell Grant in a diving suit. It's okay, but hardly stunning: a fast, violent driving game that uses the *Magic Carpet* engine (which is why people slagged it: you can't see far enough in front of you). It doesn't match the latest arcade racers.

Wing Commander 2 was the first game in the *Wing* series to have reasonably hi-res graphics, but loses out in my opinion to the vastly superior *X-Wing*

titles. *The Darkening* is the first game in the *Wing* series to really boot *X-Wing* into touch (see the review in this issue), but *WCII* didn't cut it then and doesn't now. I can't really recommend this compilation to any of you unless you're nuts about *Wing III* and *IV* and want a taste of what the series was like before Mark Hamill came into the picture.

Publisher: Telstar

Price: £19.99

SCORE: 50



It was great at the time. It's not any more.

System Shock/Space Hulk



System Shock: a true classic.

TWO ABSOLUTE CORKERS FOR less than the price of an evening out – in fact, if you get this, you'll accumulate money faster than an American TV Evangelist, because you won't go out for the next month or so. Finally, an attractive savings programme.

Anyway, *System Shock* is the first game that could legitimately use the term 'cyberpunk', because it's a first-person viewed, futuristic adventure set in space that actually has you 'jacking into cyberspace' at regular intervals. It's beautifully thought out, gripping and

scary – even if, post *Duke* and *Quake*, the 'looking around' controls seem a little cumbersome.

Space Hulk is another all-time classic. You control a team of Space Marines in a gore-laden exploration of a floating spaceship that's over-run with aliens so dangerous they make Jeffrey Dahmer look like Jeffrey from *Rainbow*. One of the best compilations around.

Publisher: Telstar

Price: £19.99

SCORE: 92



Space Hulk: scary, and addictive.

PGA Tour Golf 486/FIFA Soccer



Ye olde golf game.

THE FIRST HI-TECH VERSION OF *PGA* was just a little too much like the old *PGA Tour Golf* with better graphics. The ball dynamics were ropey and the shot control system a bit illogical. Compared to the later versions, it just feels wrong. In fact, it doesn't stand a chance when compared with some of the other 'golden oldies' of the computer golf world, such as *Links 386*, which for my money is still utterly fab and incredibly addictive. As far as the *PGA* series goes, you'd be better off buying the latest, *European Tour* version.

The same goes for the original, big sprite version of *FIFA*. Both of these games are elderly now, and the world has moved on. We now have *Links LS* (the best golf game available on PC bar none) and lots of new versions of *FIFA* to play about with (check out the *FIFA 97* preview in this issue). If both of these games were half-decent in their own right, I'd say run off and buy this compilation. But they're not. So don't.

Publisher: Telstar

Price: £19.99

SCORE: 60



Crap football game gets the red card.

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Microsoft SideWinder Gamepad

It looks a like it should be called the Bat-pad, but it's not. It's the SideWinder Gamepad. And it's made by Microsoft. Dave Mathieson's heard of them, so we asked him to take a look.

in order to operate all the different radar modes and stuff. Since this is part of the fun for them, we'll dwell no longer on their sad lives.

The one aspect of controlling PC games that everyone agrees on is the supremacy of gamepads for arcade games like beat 'em ups and footie games. For these sort of games, the ideal playing position is lying down on the floor, nowhere near a keyboard or a table or other rest. While there are plenty of pads now available for the PC, the number of joysticks on the market didn't stop Microsoft from releasing one, and the same applies here.

The SideWinder Gamepad is a rather sexy-looking black job with steely bluey grey trim. Unlike most gamepads, the SideWinder has two 'horns' on the

keystrokes to any of the buttons you choose, which means complete Duke and Quake gamepad grooviness. What's more, you can assign a set of operations to each button for maximum complexity. The beauty of this system is that it remembers the settings for each game, as long as they run under Windows 95 (this includes DOS games running in a DOS session).

That's the theory, but what about the practice? It's pretty good, really. The horn-handle things certainly make it very easy to use, and the two finger buttons underneath are perfect for sideways strafing movements in Duke Quakem.

If you've got any mates, you can daisy-chain pads together. This works by lifting a sneaky little hatch underneath. You can also use this slot for a conventional joystick as well, so you don't have to scabble around under the desk when you fancy a change.

The sheer luxury of having all the controls at your fingertips is hard to beat, though, and with careful setting up and a bit of practice you'll never need your keyboard again.

While there are other decent gamepads out there, the SideWinder's combination of comfy controls and groovy software setup make it an all-round winner. Now all Microsoft need to do is release some decent games that support it. **Z**

bottom edge that act as handles, making it much easier to hold than most. There are also loads of buttons - ten in all, including two clever underneath ones.

Installing the thing is pretty straightforward, as it plugs into a normal gameport. The SideWinder is designed to run under Windows 95, and it comes with an install routine as well as a rather nifty set-up program. Because the gamepad uses a digital interface, there are no calibration problems. The set-up program is truly excellent, though, as it uses a nice Windows interface to assign in-game keystrokes to gamepad buttons, called the Game Profiler. All you do is locate the .exe file for the game (duke3d.exe in my case). You then get a pretty picture of the gamepad, with little buttons that light up when you press the ones on the controller itself. You can then assign

Core Components P166

"If you're tired and depressed, a nice new PC is the best. It'll let you run games like Duke and Quake, and you'll be playing so much, your fingers will ache." We gave well-known poet and gobshite Dave Mathieson a nice new PC just to shut him up.

ONE OF THE MOST DEPRESSING things in the entire universe is reading a review of a fab new game, gawping in amazement at the lush screenshots, and then realising that it'll run like a crock of shite on your trusty old 486. Of course, there are plenty of upgrades that you can buy to help things along - more RAM, a faster graphics card, or a new CPU will all make a difference, but there comes a time in every young gamer's life when a new PC is the only option.

Anyone who's seen a PC advert recently will have noticed that things are getting a bit silly at the moment, with the prices of faster Pentium systems dropping like flies (that are dead). There are a few reasons for this. Firstly RAM is very cheap at the moment, and having 16MB of the stuff is no longer 'big and clever'. Secondly, the prices of Intel Pentium CPUs have dropped as their next generation Pentium Pro chip has hit the market. Finally, other companies, most noticeably Cyrix, have started to produce Pentium-compatible processors, driving prices down.

All this flannel about non-Intel CPUs is relevant here because this PC from Core Components is fitted with a Cyrix P166+ processor. The name is a bit of a con, though, as it actually runs at 133MHz. However, clever optimisation means that it should be equivalent to an Intel P166 (more of this later). There's no point in having a nice clever processor if the rest of the system holds things back, though, and Core have sensibly sorted things out on this front. The motherboard is based on the latest Triton 2 chipset and comes with 512K of pipeline burst cache. Don't worry about how this works (I don't). All you need to know is that this combination is quick. There's also 32MB of EDO RAM in the

form of two 16MB SIMMs. While there aren't any games that need more than 16MB to run, the extra certainly won't do any harm.

Graphics and sound are taken care of by a Diamond Stealth 3D 2000 and SoundBlaster SB32 card respectively. Although the Diamond card is designed with specially written 3D games in mind (of which

gone further than most in ensuring that everything's there for decent gaming, from the ThrustMaster joystick to the 1.7GB hard drive.

Overall then, a well thought-out spec at a decent price. If I were going to buy it, though, I'd get Core to whack in an Intel P166 instead. **Z**



(Above) A slice of easy PC action with Core's spanking new P166.

there aren't any at the moment), it's also a good conventional card. In order for you to enjoy all the lovely graphics, Core have thoughtfully provided an Iiyama 17inch monitor, which is loads better than many cheap 17inch models.

The performance of this system was, as you'd expect, pretty jolly good. There's plenty of welly here to give decent frame-rates even in the most demanding games. When we ran the Quake frame-rate test, however, there was a bit of a disappointment. Quake, you see, uses floating-point calculations. While the Cyrix CPU easily outperforms an Intel chip of the same clock speed, the FPU (floating point unit) isn't as quick. This slowed down the Quake score to roughly the same as a Pentium 150.

This minor glitch aside, Core have provided everything you'd need for running the best that games developers have to offer. While it's not the cheapest PC you'll come across, you can at least guarantee that you'll not be left feeling frustrated in six months time. There are plenty of other manufacturers out there who could provide you with a similar system, but to their credit, Core have

Score

90

It's got loads of buttons, looks smart and is.

Price: £39.99 Release Date: Out now
Publisher: Microsoft
Tel: 01734 271000

dan The People's Choice
Personal Computers

Score

79

A PC with lots of good stuff at a nice price.

Price: £2128 (incl VAT and delivery)
Release Date: Out now
Publisher: Core Components
Tel: 01772 729999

dan The People's Choice
Personal Computers

PC
ZONE
CLASSIC

(Above) Get your mits round this horny ten-buttoned devil.

ONE OF THE MOST HOTLY CONTENTED debates in the whole world is what the best combination of controls are for Doom (or Quake or Duke or whatever). Rubbish people with no mates claim that a keyboard's all you need, whereas cool, hard types prefer to use a mouse as well in order to express themselves fully. Flight sim heads don't usually have a choice of controls; they're simply faced with the task of memorising the function of every key on the keyboard, together with their shifted and alt-ed combinations,

BEYOND QUAKE

MERIDIAN 59

3DO Studio
The Addictive Game
<http://www.3do.com/>

If you thought 'sad' was biting your toenails or smell-testing your underpants, think again... David McCandless does both these things and has found something sadder to while away the hours.

THIS, UNFORTUNATELY, IS THE future. The Internet, not content with being a repository for 11-year-old porno addicts, software pirates, and people who will set fire to themselves when Leonard Nimoy dies, is now courting the lowest rung on the evolutionary ladder.

"Who?" we hear you ask nervously, squirming in your chair. We clear our throats and reply: "Role-playing gamers."

If you thought AD&D was bad, wait until you get a load of *Meridian 59*, the

...prawling on-line universe created by 100 - the multimedia company fronted by the improbably-named Trip Hawkins

by the improbably-named Trip Hawkins, the man who created the ill-fated 3DO games console. After the sale of their 'M2' chip technology to some multinational or-

other, 3DO have turned their resources to Internet gaming and created a monster.

- a hideously addictive role-playing game set in a glorified 3D chart-room the size of a continent, an interactive Tolkien wet-dream, where your on-line

(Right) Jasper – one of the five metropolises on the Meridian continent.



counterparts from around the world are the characters, and where using the words “forsooth” and “breastplate” in idle conversation won’t get you arrested by the FBI.

Just pulling itself from the mire of Beta testing, Meridian 59 already boasts 10,000 pan-global players. It also sports

a vast range of locales, from medieval metropolises, rustic villages, pastoral countryside, mountain ranges, and all those sorts of places. Graphically and gameplay-wise it smacks heavily of those 'outsidey' RPGs like *Elder Scrolls: Arena*, *Daggerfall*, *Ultima 8*, and *Legends Of Valour*.

The software comes on CD and after installing it onto your PC, you'll find all the graphics and resources squatting on your hard disk, saving you a mungous



over-heads, but you do get a healthy sense of location and space, and at least you're getting a graphical representation of where you are, unlike *AD&D*.

The control system is not un-*Quake* like in its delivery. Movement is hinged around the mouse and keyboard. You can look up and down, rotate 360 degrees, and amble around at a gentle canter or a heartfelt gallop. You can't get on top of things (bar other players), but your quests may lead you to dingy dungeons, fauna mazes, mountain passes, or slightly salacious pubs.

The big deal in *Meridian 59* is, of course, the real people surrounding you. As a microcosm of a fledgling capitalist society, you can barter precious items, buy accommodation in inns, bribe others, obtain weapons, or even rob people. You can chat with other people, forge alliances or even attempt dodgy 'net sex' with apparently female characters. You can band together to form a guild, a social club, or a party en route to treasure and glory. You can also be nasty and go round killing people (although if you do so, you're branded with an omnipresent 'People Killer' icon so righteous people and self-appointed policemen can chose to execute you). You can welch on deals, rub people up the wrong way, or perhaps blind them with your good old English sarcasm and nick their purse. A healthy array of monsters populate the scarier areas of the game - giant rats, zombies, spiders, scorpions, and trolls - and if you meet an untimely and entrail-laden death, you will be sent to the Underworld, where rafts of puzzles and challenges will confound your return to the 'real world'.

On-line or off-line, the world swings on without you. The idea is to gain experience, through defeating monsters, solving quests, and studying with teachers. As your wisdom grows, so does your spell list, your health points, and your combat skills. The ultimate pinnacle of achievement is to become all-powerful - a god, and then,



(Far Left) Some of your on-line chums gather for a moody group photo.

(Right) Coolio! You can bash spiders until they bleed marmalade.



presumably start hoodwinking people into believing in you even though you patently don't exist. The whole universe is richly complex, packed with hidden nooks and crannies, treasure troves, and mysterious things. This, alongside the good 200-300 people on-line simultaneously, ensures there is rarely a dull moment. Many, many sad moments, but rarely a dull one.

VERDICT: Horrifically powerful alternative to *Quake*, *AD&D*, single player role-playing games, and, indeed, real-life itself.

REQUIREMENTS: IP account. Modem. Windows 95.

Meridian 59 is now up and running, but, at time of writing, wasn't quite 'finito'. Expect us to return to this mythical universe in the near future for a fuller, more rounded review. Check out last month's CD for a free demo.

ONSLAUGHT

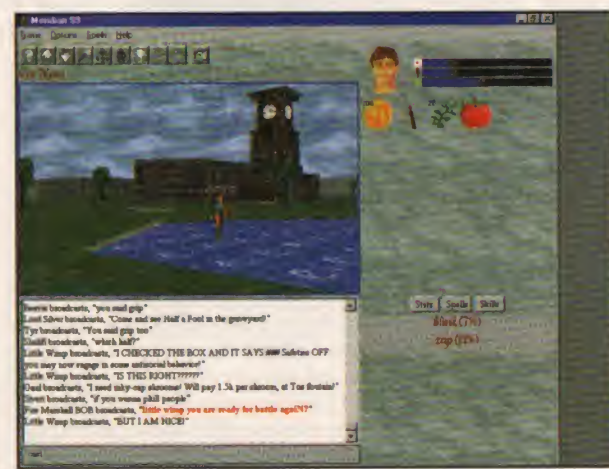
Firebrand International
The Web Game
<http://www.webplayer.com/>

Not all on-line 'jouets' demand the fastest modem in the universe. Duncan Swain checks out the only web-based game around.

Despite the Internet's current status as panacea to all mankind's ills, gamers know it as a completely different kind of animal. Try fiddling

(Below) Chat senselessly or make like Jesus and walk on water.

(Below left) The interface is very nice. (You're fired - Ed.)



with a 32-bit diallers. Try not to panic when confronted by a Net game's hideously complicated front end software. Try to avoid migraine weeding out appropriate domain name servers and then try not to vomit with bewilderment when the software asks you for an IP address. Gameplay via the amicable Net is far from child's play. It is, however, rather ironically, somewhat like the film *Child's Play*. Just how me anyone who'd rather be chased round a deserted graveyard by a demonically possessed, ginger-haired doll intent on piercing eyeballs with a hat pin, than bother going through the soul-destroying process of configuring an on-line *Quake* death match.

However not every game playable over the Internet requires a right hemisphere the size of Bangladesh to configure the software. Some decent folk have been intelligent enough to work out that some of us (admittedly the slightly thicker ones with limited patience and a life) want gamesplaying on the Internet to be as easy as locating a picture of Terri Hatcher's breasts. A shining example of 'easy peasy lemon squeezy' comes in the form of *OnSlaught*, by Firebrand International. It's a multi-player strategic conquest and domination game, not dissimilar to a sort of military *SimCity*. And it is but a small vial of urine to get working.

Basically, *OnSlaught* has two major bonuses that make it well worth investigating. Firstly, if you're one of the 89% of Internet users who have Netscape as a browser, you've already got all the software and completed all the configuration you need to play the game (you can also use Microsoft's Explorer). Secondly, apart from your phone bill for connecting to your service provider, the game doesn't cost a penny to play and, even better, Firebrand say they will stay free for good. They make their money by selling advertising space on the site and are adherents of the original Net ethos - that all software property is theft and should be distributed at no cost to the people who want to use it. Neat, non?

The game itself won't, as it stands, win any shiny awards for animation. It's more *Pacman* than *Duke Nukem* graphically, but its gameplay is engrossing. The premise is simple: you run a city which has a fixed population. You must decide on your main industry, be it food or weapons, so once you've amassed a manageable amount of the two, you can send out your armies of tanks, planes and troops to try to overrun someone

else's city, leaving your best butchers, bakers and pizza delivery boys to prepare the grub for those left behind. There are all kinds of strategic decisions to be made and instantly regretted. Alliances are forged and betrayed. You'll lose a fair few cities before you really get into the swing of it, but then you'll be able to extend your autocracy into an empire, with you - you megalomaniacal dictator you - at the centre, like a big fat spider.

There's other cool stuff to make *OnSlaught* a full-rounded on-line gaming experience. You can taunt your mainly American opponents via e-mail on Firebrand's closed system. You can choose between large and small worlds to play in. Games can go on for hours, days, or even weeks. At the moment 20 is the maximum number of players per world and Firebrand reckons *OnSlaught* has up to 5000 regular players already, impressive considering the company never advertises, and current players will have found the game through their own efforts or by word of mouth.

Firebrand, despite only having gone on-line last year, are already looking to improve its hardware setup and hire more programmers. Sound and extra animated AVI movies will soon be added to the game as will a new 2D interface and a posh 3D VRML version (basically a 3D version of hyper text). There's also a brand new JAVA game in the pipeline claimed to surpass *OnSlaught* in playability and functionality. And for gagging Doomsters, *DeathMatch OnSlaught* should be introduced by the time you read this.

VERDICT: Much potential. A little croaky but soon to be improved.

REQUIREMENTS: IP account. Web browser (Netscape 2.0 or Microsoft Explorer).



Terrisic!

Terris is only playable via an America On Line (AOL) account. However, stuck to this month's mag, you will see a CD with the words *Terris* all over it. On it you'll find everything you'll need to play *Terris* (except for a decent modem; anything less than a 14.4 will make life slow). There's all the artwork for the game pre-loaded, free access to AOL for at least 10 hours and because it's Windows based, no worries about memory. The game will run fine on a 486 (some players run on 386s).

```
>target
Thrax broadly gestures at the creatures
The room fills with blazing lightning...
Queen is hit by a intense wave of electricity for 72 damage!
Black Ant is hit by a intense wave of electricity for 73 damage!  It's resistance reduces the
damage to 37
Black Ant is slain!
Black Ant had nothing of value
Black Ant is hit by a intense wave of electricity for 80 damage!  It's resistance reduces the
damage to 40
```

TERRIS

America On-Line
The Sad Game
<http://www.aol.com/>

Daniel Emery calls himself Thrax, takes Pro Plus to play this game and has no friends. Keyword here: 'sad'.

There has always been a place in my heart for adventure games. From *The Hobbit* on the Spec, *Twin Kingdom Valley* on the BBC and some adventure game on the university's computer, the name of which will leave an indelible blank on my mind for life. But finally there is a game that is just like the days of yore except that a) it's fast b) it's world-wide and c) it's good. The joys of MUD have finally escaped the net and have appeared in a fresh new form on AOL. It's now called *Terris*.

Now if *Quake* is the genetically-enhanced clone of *Wolfenstein 3D*, then *Terris* is the love child of *AD&D* and the old mainframe multi-player games. Although these games involve changing your name to Algarloxtrexx The Barbarian and wielding a +2 Battle Axe in the Mystic Wardrobe of Thane, you don't really have to be a complete twat to play (although it helps).

Terris is a mythical land within which there are quests to solve, over 200 different monsters, a bloody enormous map, and a load of other people on-line trying to do the same thing. Sounds simple? Well it is and it isn't. The puzzles start easy (walk up the road, get flower, return) but get murderously hard later. The monsters come in four flavours. Laughably easy, tough, really tough and Shit! Run! For a sense of achievement, *Terris* also sports a league table feature (world ranking, class ranking and so on) creating a furious 'I am the best' mentality - something anyone who has played a deathmatch tourney will know all too well. What could be take it or leave it becomes pathologically addictive. People will stay on for 'just another five minutes' all night trying to go up a rank. Well, I do.

Careful where you step. *Terris* is entirely text-based. No sprites, no rendering, no shaded polygrams - bugger-all in fact. This takes a little getting used to, and you do end up scrawling very sad maps of dungeons



(Above) The wonderful world of *Terris*. With castles. And trees. And mountains. And pixies. And elves.

(Top) Yes, it really is that exciting.

(Below) Lots of silky pantless demons. Keyword here: 'homo-erotic'.



and the like - but it makes the game fast and demands not a little imagination from the player. You map to survive. The land is huge with dungeon locations, prisons, lost towers, a huge ocean and even an Island full of dinosaurs in *Jurassic Park* fashion. If you don't know your way, you will get lost and walk straight into a bunch of nasties. Then you'll die. Horribly.

You can improve your chances of survival in two ways: ascending the 'level' by gaining experience killing beasties and doing quests (which will give you access to more spells, skills and other valuables); or by teaming up with other players and forming a hit squad to take out difficult monsters. The other players add a whole twist to the game. Because they are real people (despite having names like Timesy, Denard, Wulfclaw and Sharqua) everything becomes unpredictable. You never know quite what they'll do. However, if they wind you up (as Americans are wont to do) you can't kill 'em. Annoying perhaps, but this would result in speed typists always winning. Not good.

And on the subject of pains in the arse there are two major bugbears in *Terris*. The lesser of the two is that you will inevitably meet a couple of mindless tossers playing the game (the standard danger with any on-line game). The other one is the mythical monster 'Lag'. This frightening behemoth rears its ugly head everytime America goes on line (around about 7pm GMT). The *Terris* server can't cope with the traffic and grinds to a snail's pace. This can be very frustrating and often leads to your getting killed. However AOL have made assurances that a new server will be in place by the time you read this.



However, it should be said that *Terris*' down points are minimal, and the game play is hot. With a non-stop diet of killing, questing and trying to better yourself each night, the gameplay is limitless and compulsive. The absence of graphics isn't much of a hindrance and indeed adds to the game in some respects. It is definitely one of those games you'll either love or hate. However if you have a modem, AOL are offering free time before you have to subscribe, so *Terris* is definitely worth a look. But me, I'm totally addicted and I'm off now to slay a dragon.

VERDICT: Sad. Sad. Sad. Sad. Sad. But addictive. **REQUIREMENTS:** AOL Account. Modem. No girlfriend.

SUBSPACE

Virgin Interactive Entertainment.
The Asteroids-type game
<http://www.vie.com/subspace>

If action is what you want and *Quake* is what you can't get, then the Internet has an alternative. **Stuart Houghton** goes retro.

Are Virgin having a laugh? 2D graphics? Small spacecraft firing pixel-sized projectiles at one another? Lots of inertia-led drifting about? Players frantically trying to thrust the exact amount in the other direction in order to stop dead (and uniformly failing to do so)? It's *Asteroids* innit? Eh? EH?

Good guess, but not quite. *SubSpace* is the latest combatant in the on-line games arena, sneaking up quietly behind heavyweights such as *C&C* and the *Q* word, hoping to smack them over the head with a rock while they brag about the size of their weapons.

Currently the joys of *SubSpace* are for Windows 95 users only and work best if played using via 32 Bit Dial-Up Networking. Another catch is the need for a full IP account with your service provider. Fortunately, most providers offer this service nowadays, but some (notably AOL) do not, so check before you download to save yourself an exercise in frustration.

Once on your hard disk, the game is a doddle to install, although there is a good technical support section on the *SubSpace* Web site to guide you through any problems that may occur. You'll need to create a password for yourself and a user name by which you will be known in the *SubSpace* universe. As this is an on-line game, you should of course select something sensible like 'StarKiller', 'Spoooge-a-tollah', or 'Borakkk, scourge of the ice planet Thrunknor'. Armed with a suitably foolish nom-de-frag, you can now connect to the *SubSpace* server by selecting one of six combat zones. These are theoretically graded by the experience of the players, although in practice only the expert zone is barred to less experienced users by restricting access to low-scoring players (ie us).

There is a choice of six craft for your flying pleasure with the usual compliment of abilities (fast + low shields; slow + high shields + bigger guns; rubbish weapons + stealth, etc.). I would recommend you choose a slower craft to as they are all total swine to control. You'll save yourself much frantic braking and cursing of Newton if you experiment with low-speed first.

You know the drill. Fly around the 2D arena, grab power-ups and frag or be fragged. Fine in theory, but with a slow connection this is harder than a stale granite sandwich. The problem lies in the fact that your craft seems to be moving perfectly smoothly, but the other players appear to jump around the screen as the software tries to update their positions. This caused much confusion initially due to my devil-may-care attitude to instruction reading and my assumption that everyone else knew how to perform the secret short-range warp manoeuvre.

Assuming you get a decent connection (the front end grades the current server load for each of the zones from 'Good' to 'Terrible' to allow you a choice before you log in), you should be able to get to grips with the controls and connect bullet to prey with a little practice. To avoid massacre by the hordes of no-life fragmeisters it may be a good tactic to seek out similar dweebs and form a squadron where you reap the benefits of ganging up on the hard kids, using chat channels separate to those normally used to call your opponents girls' names to co-ordinate your attacks. They do this big time in



(Above) The actual game *SubSpace* won't grab so here are pretty screenshots of the homepage.

the States already apparently, so look out for huge packs of Uncle Sam's finest who fly about the universe looking for easy kills.

As you may have gathered, this game is unlikely to stun people to silence with its gut-wrenchingly fast 3D polygons, fractal compression texture maps and dynamic light-sourcing because, frankly, it hasn't got any. The graphics are simple, but crisply drawn and clearly represent what is going on. Younger readers should know that, once, all games looked similar to this. Sweets were cheaper in them days an' all.

It is also worth restating that this is a (currently) free beta version. Virgin have set up an excellent Web site for the game with plenty of scope for players to contribute ideas to its development and have promised to make several versions available, freezing each revision so you can choose your favourite flavour.

But at the end of the day there's no doubt that you'll find much to enjoy in *SubSpace*, although it is not likely to work as a single player game and, as ever with on-line gaming, it's only the excitement of going up against real people which really makes it work.

VERDICT: Not extraordinary, but fun. **REQUIREMENTS:** Internet Provider account (IP). Windows 95. Special *SubSpace* software. Z

(Below) A hall of fame. Yes, you too can become the *UberInertiaMeister*.



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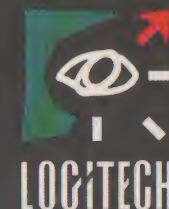
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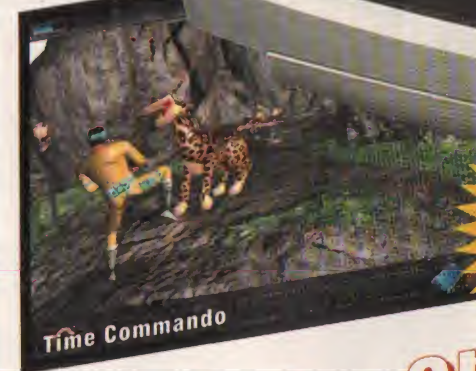
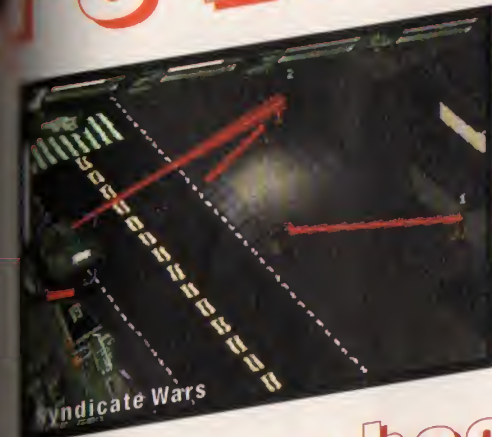
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The Boggit's Mailbag

Discworld

I've got all the items that the Arch-Chancellor wants except dragon's breath. How do I get it?

Karl Daly, Newport

Five pints of Old Tanglefoot followed by a packet of pork scratchings and a curry usually does the trick for me!

When you find a body lying in the gutter and you want to know if it's still alive, you can hold a mirror in front of its mouth to see if it steams up with its breath. Well it's the old mirror trick we're going to use on the dragon.

You'll find a mirror in the palace bathroom, so take it and catapult yourself up to the rooftops. Climb to the tower and use the mirror on the tip of the flagpole. Use the mirror, once more to adjust it, and the dragon will do the rest.

Sam And Max

I'm completely stuck! I've arrived in Bumpsville, been chucked out on numerous occasions, and have found absolutely nothing to help me. What do I do now?

P Kelly, London

(Below right) Bloody passages and exploding chests. No, not another episode of ER, but the way to the charred remains of the Goblin King in *Ultima VII - The Serpent Isle*.

(Below) Is the cat sat on the rug? Sam and Max do their bit for the Cats' Protection League.



What you really want out of this place is the wig, but it will take a couple of trips to get it. First, use the bed and pick up the pillow. You can now use the golf ball retriever to get the book from above the door. Go to the music room and watch the band. Leave, and when you see the robot, use the book on him. Connect all the wires and the robot will go into the music room and set off the alarm. Go to the alarm room and use the alarm equipment. In the virtual reality room pick up the sword, enter the cave and kill the dragon. Pick up the heart to get a key. Return to the music room and use the key to disable the alarm. Go to the trophy room and get the photo of John Muir. You will now have to leave and visit the Savage Jungle and the Celebrity Vegetable Museum before you return to get the wig. I'll let you work those bits out.

Ultima VII

These Ultima games are bloody hard aren't they? In part 2 of *Ultima VII - The Serpent Isle*. I can't get past the knight's test. I've found the claw and used it on myself, as the scroll suggests, but I can't find the ashes of the Goblin King Wossisname. There's a locked door near the start, but not one of the six keys I've found unlocks it. Could you tell me if I've done something horribly wrong? I can't get very far without becoming a knight as no one in Monitor wants to talk to me.

D Chambers, Bognor Regis

Why do you want to be a knight? Being a king is much better. As my old granny used to say, "Once a king, always a king. But once a knight's enough!". Mind you, I never did understand that one.

There are two invisible passages in this area of the dungeon. The first is near some exploding chests, and the other is marked by two torches which are hanging close together on the wall. The secret room containing the ashes is on the west side of the dungeon. You need to use the blood with the ashes to kill the wolf.



Quake's secret levels

So you've given the shareware version of this game a good thrashing, but have you visited all of the secret levels?

Nightmare level

Once you've beaten the shareware version at normal difficulty how about trying it all again? But this time go for it with the odds a little more in favour of the bad guys.

Start as usual and walk through one of the normal difficult teleporters. Instead of going into the dimension of the doomed sligate, walk into the room for episode four, The Elder World - the one with the pool. Go back into the pool and then swim forward again as far as you can go. Sink down and you'll drop to the bottom. If you pick the right spot you'll end up standing on a wooden frame. Walk around this and into the cave which leads into the Nightmare level entrance. You'll be confronted by the same levels as before but this time it's a lot tougher.

Ziggurat Vertigo - Low Gravity level

On Grisly Grotto, in the room with the five floor pads and the wall guns, two side rooms will open up when the floor pads are pressed - these lead down to the areas where the ogres shot at you from the floor below. Push both the buttons on either side, and the message "A secret cave has opened" will appear. Go back to the main water area, and from where you enter the water, swim right. Between the two pyramid shapes a wall will have opened, revealing a secret area. Swim up to this point and enter the circular teleporter.

Super StreetFighter II Turbo The Great Akuma cheat

To be the Grand Guardian, follow these not so easy instructions:

On the selection screen start the game using a punch button - select a turbo setting with the same button. The cursor will now be on Ryu.

Leave the cursor there for roughly three seconds, then move right to T-Hawk and repeat. Now move left to Guile and do the same. Move the cursor to Cammy, making sure you pass over Dhalsim. Leave the cursor there for the same amount of time, then go back to Ryu, passing over Ken. Wait for three seconds, then press all the punch buttons. If you've carried out the moves correctly Ryu's portrait will turn black, allowing you to play as Akuma.

(Submitted by Michael Downing, Doncaster)



(Above) Cop a load of these extra super secret special levels in *Quake*.

(Above right) "I'm telling ya, British Beef is safe." A huge chopper-wielding *Witchhavener*.



The lightning gun

This cheat will only work in deathmatch mode.

Start a deathmatch game in the Welcome to Quake Arena, enter the console option and type <REGISTERED 1>.

If you now go to the room for episode three, you can go through the previously locked doors. Here you'll find the lightning gun plus lots of power cells.

(Submitted by Gavin Yuill, Essex)

Railroad Tycoon

Go to the top layer of maps and press <\$> to get 500,000 dollars. Another way to make big cash is to press <SHIFT/F1/\$> together - this instantly gives over \$3,000,000. However, it seems that this can only be used once.

Comanche

In the options menu (press <ESC>), hold down the backspace key and type <KYLE>. A new pull-down menu will appear called CHEATS. Use these options to repair and re-arm your chopper.

(Submitted by Iain MacMillan, Aberdeenshire)

Witchhaven

Press '<' followed by backspace to stop the game, then you can enter the following cheats:

wango	Gives keys
mommy	Gives magic
scooter	Gives weapon

Sim Tower

When starting a new tower, simply click in the lowest left-hand corner to double your starting money.

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The Gene Machine

We've been around the world in 80 days, journeyed to the moon, and dived 20,000 leagues under the sea just to bring you the solution to this Great British Adventure. Hooray for us, and three cheers for old Queen Vic. Gawd Bless her Majesty!

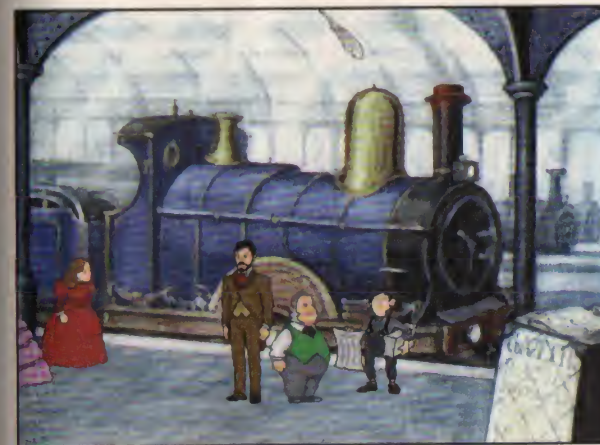
SPOILED



LEAVE THE STATION AND WALK across the road to the cab. Once inside your house pick up the cigar case and the old newspaper. Get the letter from the hall carpet and read it. Go upstairs and take the key from the bedside table. Return to the hallway, then go downstairs to Mossop's room and get the syrup of figs and whisky bottles. Go to the study and use the key to open the drawer. Search the drawer and take the house deeds. Pick up the artefact from the table.

Leave home and travel to your girlfriend's house. Enter the house and talk to the maid. Head for the garden and pick the catnip flower at the entrance. Talk to Maribella, when she asks for tea, return to the house and ask the maid to prepare tea for her mistress. Leave the house and return home.

Give the catnip to the cat and receive the mouse in turn. Speak to your servant and ask where you can meet some dubious characters - Mossop will tell you the address of a Whitechapel pub. Search your wallet three times to reveal all of its contents. Leave home and travel to the pub.



In the East End

Talk to the first drinker, and when he asks for something to wipe his greasy hands, offer him your handkerchief.

Return to your girlfriend's house and pick up the tea. Use the cigar case to pick up the slice of cake. Use the handkerchief on the cup to make it greasy then take it to Maribella. Once your girlfriend is holding the cup, give her the mouse. Take the ring which she drops on the grass.

Examine the club card from your wallet, then go there in the cab. Enter the club and take the snuff box. Enter the main room and talk to the Earl who is playing golf. When the Earl asks for his port, go to the butler and use the syrup of figs in the glass of port wine. Talk to the butler to make him deliver the port. Take the Earl's calling card from the floor once he leaves. Talk to the club members and make the wager. Talk again to the club members to make the side bet over the use of a ship. Offer your house deeds as the stake.

Leave the club and travel to the railway station. Buy a newspaper.

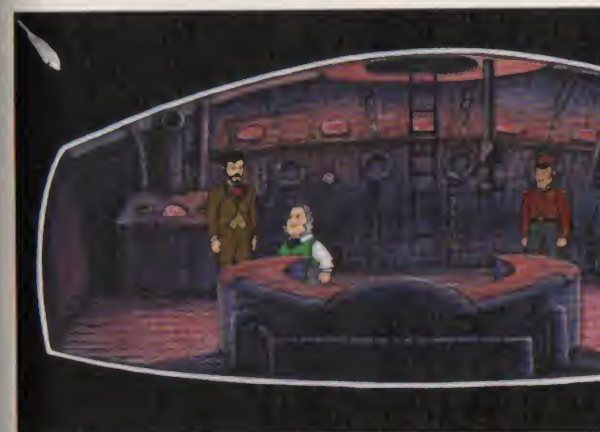
Return to the club, talk to the club member and read the new paper to secure the bet. Travel to the East End pub, walk to the back room where you'll find the forger and attempt to give him the old paper. Give him the ring and the old paper followed by the new one. Leave the pub, use the coach and then return to collect the amended paper from the back room in the East End pub.

(Above) Buy a newspaper and you've got the first ingredient for the making of a classic 'Sting' which will win you a ship plus a full crew.

(Above right) What's a nice guy like you doing in a low dive like this? You're looking for a camera? I'll just bet you are!

(Below right) Identifying the site of Disney Island isn't so difficult - simply take a trip to the moon inside a steam engine converted to a rocket, take a picture of the Earth using a Victorian camera stolen from a brothel, and use snuff powder soaked in whisky to provide the flash. What's the problem?

(Below) Okay, you've made it to the lair of the mad professor. Now you need to convince him that it would be a 'good idea' to destroy his invention and blow up the island.



Go to the club and give the amended paper to the club member to win the ship.

Travel to Buckingham Palace and try to enter. Use the Earl's calling card to gain entrance. Talk with the Queen and eventually you'll be permitted to take a letter from the pile.

Travel to the Science Museum and talk with the guard. When you are refused entry, leave, use the coach, return, and give the artefact to the guard. Take a punchcard from the computer and use it in the computer. Take another card and leave. Go home and give the punchcard to the cat, who will rip it up.

Travel to the docks and talk to the harbourmaster about everything. Eventually you will learn about the missing map, and the blockade. Go back to Buckingham Palace and ask the Queen for permission to pass through the blockade - she will give you another letter. Travel to the docks and show the pass to the harbourmaster. When he refuses to let your ship leave without plans, give him the dummy cigar as a bribe and he will give you a map. As you still won't be able to leave harbour without plans, take the coach back to the museum. Put the damaged card in the computer. Leave the museum and travel to the professor's house. Talk with him, then enter the barn and get the vitriol and remote control. Go to the East End pub and talk with the barman until he gives you a ploughman's lunch. Return to the professor's house and talk with him. You will now be told to find a camera and flash-powder.

Return to Whitechapel and enter the brothel. Talk with the woman at the door, then give her your letter from the Queen. Go upstairs and talk with Dolly until »



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she gives you the camera! Use the whisky on the snuffbox to create flash-powder. Travel back to the professor and talk to him again. Board the rocket and blast off for the moon.

To the moon and back

Use the hammer to get the oxygen pipe. Take the spade and the space suit. Look through the porthole in the ceiling. Use the controls as follows: first move the engine control (far right) upwards to almost the last position. Move the central control upwards to the three-quarters up position. Move the far left control to the same point as the far right control. When all three levers are in the right position you'll get the message "That seems

to have aligned the levers correctly". Now 'click' on the far right lever to see your inventory. Use the oxygen pipe to jam the levers into position.

Exit the spaceship and enter the cave. Wait until Robert enters the next cave entrance, then look through the hole in the wall. Move Robert through the room with the remote control. Cross over the chasm using the fallen rock to the next room and use the spade to dig up the mineral deposit. Collect the moon rock from the hole, then exit the caves. Put the camera on the moon's surface and take a picture of the earth. Examine the photograph. Return and speak to the professor, who will give you a cheese extractor. Use the extractor on the moon rock to get the phosphate.



(Left) Position the moon in the middle of the porthole using the three levers, then use a piece of old pipe to keep them in place.

(Above) Talk to the guard at the Science Museum.

(Right) See if you can amuse her majesty.

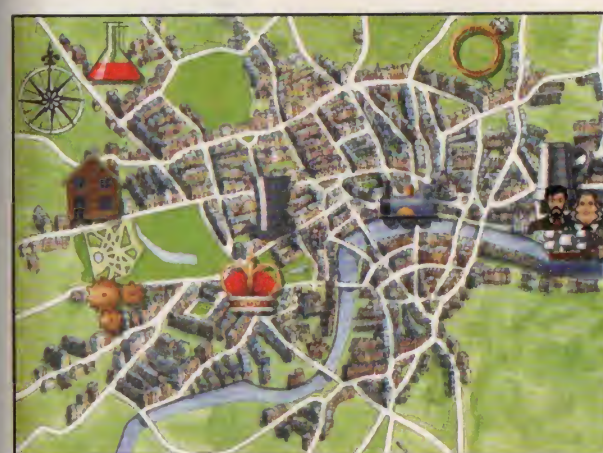


Then return to the professor and use the vitriol on the phosphate to create oxygen.

Back on Earth

Return to the docks and board the ship. Speak with the Captain. Talk again and give him your world map. When the engine stops, walk along the deck and take the boat hook. Move further aft and go below to the boiler room. Get the oil can and the

(Below) Return to the native village and give the chief the rock in exchange for Mossop.



screwdriver. Examine the gauge and the valve. Back on deck, move back to the middle entrance. In the first cabin, use the screwdriver to remove the porthole glass. Go next door to the Captain's cabin and get the bagpipes and a quill from the porcupine. Return to the winch at the stern and use the oil can to free it. Move the winch above the hole in the deck. Place the porthole glass over the hole. Talk with the sailor to get his spit on the glass. Take the "YUKI" below decks and seal the valve. Use the quill on the gauge. Look at the gauge. Go to the corridor outside the Captain's cabin and look at the split steam pipe. Go to the front of the ship and stand near the flag. Tell Mossop to get the flag. Use the flag to seal the split pipe. Go to the boiler room and use the bagpipes to stoke up the engine.

To the bottom of the sea

Once you are dropped on the ice-flow, find and enter the submarine. Talk with the Captain then exit the submarine into Atlantis. Play the organ, read the bundle of letters. Take the diving suit from the bedroom and examine the mermaid picture. Return to the screen above the submarine and reread the letters until Mossop asks who the letters are from. (Revealing that they are from the mermaid.) Talk with Captain Nematode to tell him why he is seeking Atlantis.

Return to your own ship and speak with the Captain to move the ship south. Show him the photograph to move to a desert island.

(Above) The Gene Machine tea-towel, every mama should have one.

(Above right) Watch out for flares in the Gene Machine room.

(Below) The riddle of the three pillars is not so hard, providing you can speak Greek, and you manage to find the missing blue crystal.



Desert island

Take the rock from the beach and go into the jungle. Pick berries from the bush at the side of the lake. Return to main path and take the ivy from the side of it. Enter the village. After speaking with the chief, place the ivy on the rock, then place the berries on the 'ivy-rock'. Give this trinket to the Chief. Follow the guide into the cave. Enter the serpent's mouth and take the sabre. Return to the cave mouth and use the sabre on the vine. Take the furry animal and place it on the pad in the serpent's mouth. Enter the inner cave and examine the plug in the ceiling. Leave the caves and return to the fresh water lake beside the berry bush. Look at the water. You will now be wearing the diving suit. Walk to the centre of the lake and pull the plug.

Return to the inner cave and cross over the cooled lava to the crystal room. Take the small blue crystal located in the top right of the central cluster. Oil the lift and use it to enter Atlantis. Enter the arena and take the rock. Enter the throne room and take the crystals. Return to the entrance room with the three plinths. Place the crystals - purple, green and blue on the three plinths - starting from the left. Go and speak to Captain Nematode to get the map. Return to the native village and exchange the rock for Mossop. Return to the ship. Give the Captain the map.

Later, on Disney Island

Speak to the henchman and go through all of the options. Speak to the tentacle. Speak again to the henchman until he is attacked by the tentacle and you are freed. Enter the Gene Machine room and use the flare. Use the switch on the wall panel to reverse the machine. Speak to Doctor Disney to make him stand on the central plinth. Tell Mossop to throw the switch and turn the doctor into a pig and a snake. Return to the cage room and throw the wall switch to release the animals. Use the airship to escape from the island. A bit of a pedal and you'll be home in foggy London town in time for tea and crumpets. **Z**

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Welcome to the all-new **PC Zone** Buyers' Guide. In it you'll find every game we've reviewed over the past 12 months, along with every other game we think you should know about since we started reviewing games back in March 1993. It's sub-divided by genre and we've tried to keep all the prices up to date so you can work out just how much of a bargain that budget compilation pack really is. Back issues are readily available - call our Hotline on (01789) 489215 for further details.

R = reviewed (Issue number)
PD = playable demo (Issue number)
RD = rolling demo (Issue number)
LE = level editor
T = tips or solution (Issue number)

C = Classic
R = Recommended
P = Pants

ACTION

ABSOLUTE ZERO 70
Domark, £39.99
Sub-standard Wing Commander clone which needs loads of 110 space.

R36 PD36

ALADDIN 70
Virgin, £29.99
Pointy-slipped platform action. Overall a sub-standard Prince Of Persia.

R24 PD23

ALIEN BREED: TOWER ASSAULT 81
Team 17, £29.99
Good graphics, frenzied shoot 'em up action.

R28 PD3

ASSAULT RIGS 78
Psygnosis, £34.99
PSX-converted platform game in a tank. With network options.

R39

ATARI ACTION PACK 50
Activision, £24.99
Atari games for Windows; like a time machine that takes you somewhere crap.

R26

BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN 83
FunSoft, £34.99
Pretty good conversion of a good-looking beat 'em up which runs well without a 3D accelerator card. The gameplay itself is a bit too fireball-orientated with sword and sorcery effects. But if you must have it...

R30 PD37

BATTLE BEAST 68
7th Level, £29.99
Great-looking cartoon beat 'em up with limited gameplay.

R32



CANNON FODDER 90
Virgin Interactive, £24.99
Great fun. Action-orientated forerunner to the likes of Command & Conquer and Z.

R14 PD13, 28

CHAOS ENGINE 60
Renegade, £32.99
Multi-directional scrolling, top-down, manic shoot 'em up action.

R20

CRIME PATROL (& GAME GUN) 70
American Laser Games/Mirage, £39.99
Shoot 'em up with bundled lightgun which is compatible with some other titles, making it pretty good value.

R32

CRUSADER 91
Origin/Electronic Arts, £49.99
Action, adventure, problem-solving, strategy and people getting their heads blown off all rolled into one in this isometric-viewed, futuristic shoot 'em up. Little Big Adventure with guns.

R33

CYBERBYTES 10
Gametek, £24.99
One of the games which helped build the reputation Gametek now enjoy. Why this should be gawd alone knows 'cos it's crap. Jerky, slow and just plain stupid.

R31

CYBERIA 80
Interplay, £49.99
Walk about for a bit in good-looking backgrounds, making decisions or solving puzzles which determine whether you live or die, then you get to do the shoot 'em up bit. And so on, until you finish it. Only for the extremely patient.

R25 PD23

CYBERIA 2 80
Interplay, £44.95
If you liked the first game, you'll like this. Your quest (just for a change) is to save the world via the usual mix of arcade shooty bits and crap 'adventure' bits.

R31

CYCLEMANIA 83
Accolade, £39.99
Extremely cack Road Rash-wannabe that got an insanely high score from a reviewer clearly suffering from some kind of mania himself. Take 40 off it, and you're nearer to what it deserves.

R20 PD20

DARK FORCES 95
LucasArts/Virgin, £54.99
Wonderfully atmospheric Doom-isation of Star Wars that many people preferred to Doom itself. Great graphics, tricky puzzles, true 3D levels and stirring tunes - and you get to shoot the heads off the Imperial Stormtroopers. What more could you lot ask for?

R25 PD25, 29

DESCENT 94
Interplay, £44.99
First version of the sick-making whirly, spinny-roundy up and downy, 3D shoot 'em up. Seriously maimtastic. In a madman-laughing-insanely type of way.

R25 PD25, 28, LE29



DESCENT 2 90
Interplay, £39.99
Hardened Descent players will find enough to test them, but there's a learning curve for newcomers too. New weapons, monsters and great sound effects, plus 'Capture the Flag' team games. Great stuff.

R37 PD37

DESERT STRIKE 78
Gremlin, £34.99
Ropey conversion of Mega Drive's strategic helicopter shoot 'em up.

R20

DOOM 96
ID Software, £29.99
Surely we don't need to tell you about this one. If you're still after levels for it though, we had 130 on Issue 17's cover disk, 500+ on Issue 21's, and about the same on Issue 25's. And it's free on Issue 28's. See also Ultimate Doom, below.

R13, PD28, LE15

DOOM II 90
Virgin Interactive, £49.99
Extraordinarily expensive sequel with new weapons and new monsters. A whole heap more levels for it on Issue 25's cover disk. See also Ultimate Doom.

R20

DUKE NUKEM 3D 93
US Gold, £44.99
A Doom-clone that actually manages to be more inventive and entertaining than the original, although admittedly, they took enough time to get there. Full registered version has some cool new weapons and nastier enemies, a level designer, and the facility to convert Doom-wads into Duke maps. It's funny, too. Unfortunately, it came out at not quite the right moment...

R40 PD41

ECCO THE DOLPHIN 55
Sega, £29.99
Very old Mega Drive game. Bloody boring and a bit of a pointless conversion in our opinion.

R37

EXTREME GAMES 70
Psygnosis, £29.99
PSX-converted, trendy-sports combat racing game that plods even on a P133.

R37

FADE TO BLACK 94
Electronic Arts, £44.99
The follow-up to Flashback, with outstanding graphics, fancy spinny-aroundy polygon bits, and a level of difficulty that's up there with licking your own anus. Has all the elements of the original, including morphing security androids and white plimsolls - and more.

R31

FINAL DOOM 62
GT Interactive, £44.95
Last attempt to wring yet more money from our suckers who haven't heard of Duke 3D or Quake. The levels are quite good, it sports hi-res and Internet play, and it runs under Windows 95. But really, who cares?

R42

FIREFIGHT 65
Electronic Arts, £39.99
Bizarre, flawed isometric shoot 'em up.

R31

FIRESTORM: THUNDERHAWK 2 60
Core Design, £39.99
Below-par, helicopter shoot 'em up with pop-up mountains. Graphics are on the dodgy side and it's virtually impossible to see more than 200 yards in front of you.

R36

FLASHBACK 89
US Gold, £9.99
Beautifully animated platform game with nightmarishly hard foes and treacherous traps that will do to your tads what a Spanish chef does for a bull's. Varied locations - including a killing gameshow - but it isn't easy and the rather complicated controls only work well with a gamepad.

R6



FX FIGHTERS 93
Philips, £39.99
One of the best 3D beat 'em ups on the PC. Loads of moves (and those oh-so-essential secret moves), atmospheric graphics and fighters ranging from snappy-limbed insects through pneumatic-breasted women/cat hybrids to giant turd monsters (that's what it looks like to us, anyway). Cool.

R29 PD30

HERETIC 78
ID/Raven, £39.99
Doom in tights.

R25 PD25

Different.

escape

THE ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE FOR MEN

FIRST ISSUE ON SALE

10th October

HEXEN 94

One stage up from Doom in terms of gameplay, it's essentially a simplified RPG with a less linear approach and an improved game engine that lets you look up and down (and, if you're not careful, throw up from motion sickness). Great-looking, extremely involving, with an eight-player deathmatch facility. And very, very hard.

R33 (booklet)

THE HIVE 78

Funsoft UK, £39.99
Pre-rendered shoot 'em up. Rebel Assault without the good bits.

R35 PD35

IMPERIAL PURSUIT 80

LucasArts, £19.99
X-Wing add-on: long, involving, 'story-driven' tour of duty.

R7

INFERNO 88

Ocean, £44.99
Slick space combat thingy that branches out into sub-aqua combat thingy and even planet surface hovery combat thingy. Cut-scenes, reasonable graphics, fine explosions, booming sfx and pilot aids galore.

R20 PD25

JUNGLE STRIKE 79

Gremlin, £39.99
Follow up to Desert Strike, only this time with more trees.

R26 PD25

KLIK 'N' PLAY 88

Europress, £39.99
It's not a game as such, but a game designer for Windows that lets you make the sort of sick, unpleasant action fests that you've always wanted. Neat, intuitive, and whole heaps of fun.

R29

THE LION KING 71

Virgin, £29.99
Platform games follow Disney films as surely as dogs follow bitches in heat.

R23 PD25

MAGIC CARPET 96

Electronic Arts, £44.99
Very good mana-based shoot 'em up that's very hard and gets a bit repetitive after a while, but looks great. Maybe a score of 96 was a bit over the top though.

R21 PD22



MAGIC CARPET 2 92

Electronic Arts, £44.99
Improved version of the first game with new monsters and scary night-time bits. Also comes with a good on-line help mode, and it's a little easier than the original. Which is good news for wusses.

R32 PD31

MAGIC CARPET: HIDDEN WORLDS 80

Builtfrog, £19.99

Add-on levels for Magic Carpet.

R27

MECHWARRIOR 2 88

Activision, £49.99
Rarely has stomping around the countryside in a 70-foot armour-plated monster robot, blowing the shit out of anything you take a dislike to and generally running amok been so rewarding, so spiritual, so... healing.

R32 PD32

METALTECH: EARTHSIEGE 87

Sierra, £39.99
More stomping about in gigantic descendants of vacuum cleaners, except the landscape's totally flat and the opponents are rather too hard in the campaign mode.

R24 PD23



METALTECH: EARTHSIEGE 2 90

Sierra, £44.99
Same set-up and plot as (you guessed it) Metaltech: Earthsiege. Equally hard campaign mode, but here the graphics are excellent, the terrain varied and the sound effects stepped up. Complete with FMV movies and improved game play, this is just about the best giant robot game around at the moment. Oh, and it's Windows 95-only.

R38 PD39

MORTAL KOMBAT 3 90

GT Interactive, £44.99
The latest version of the much-hyped 'gore-fest', complete with ludicrous cartoon-style blood spatters, fatality, babe-ality and 'friendship' finishing moves - if you can work out the multiple button presses, never mind carry them out. Fast-paced, good graphics and animation - an excellent two-dimensional beat 'em up.

R33 PD33

THE MUPPET CD-ROM 87

Starwave/Ocean, £39.99
Hilarious outing featuring all your favourite sock-based characters in seven average-ish arcade/puzzle games which sparkles with Muppet humour. Includes the Swedish Chef in a simplistic Doom-rip-off, and a superb intro sequence.

R11 PD10

MINILIST 91

Philips, £39.99
Good-looking shoot 'em up that's basically a first-person viewed Asteroids. Loads of variety, with mayhem, retro wire-frame and bizarre pool table levels, and even a bonus sub-game of Asteroids itself. Add to this a wide range of network options, a Power/Dog Eat Dog soundtrack, and even an in-game option to play your own CDs, and you have a minor corker on your hands.

R43

PINBALL WORLD 77

21st Century Entertainment, £44.99
Make your way round the world via pinball tables. Or not.

R35

PINBALL DREAMS 70

21st Century Entertainment, £39.99
Eight tables with lots of rendered garbage thrown in. Well, it is on CD-ROM after all...

R20

PINBALL DREAMS 2 70

21st Century Entertainment, £19.99
Four tables, no CD-provoked extras, and thus much cheaper.

R17

PITFALL: THE MAYAN ADVENTURE 70

Activision, £44.99
Ancient Atari VCS platform game conversion. Try to stay calm.

R32

PRAY FOR DEATH 70

Virgin Interactive, £44.95
Sub-standard beat 'em up which fails to impress. Pray for something else instead.

R11

PRIMAL RAGE 82

Time Warner Interactive, £39.99
Dinosaur-based beat 'em up in the sideways-on viewed Streetfighter mould (except you get to use your teeth more). Good graphics, good gameplay: Jurassic Park for psychopaths.

R32 PD31

PRINCE OF PERSIA 2 89

Broderbund, £12.99
Nice-looking platform game with pointy shoes and pyjamas.

R5

PRIVATEER 75

Origin, £11.99
Wing Commander-style dogfighting. Elite-style trading.

R9

PRO PINBALL: THE WEB 90

Empire Interactive, £34.99
Extremely realistic and gorgeous-looking game with a stonking soundtrack. There's only one table, but it's feature-packed - you can even nudge the table from each side and the bottom. The best pinball experience you'll be likely to get, short of buying a real Williams table.

R35 PD35

PSYCHO PINBALL 78

Codemasters, £44.99
Okay-looking and sounding lightweight pinball game.

R27 PD23

QUAKE 96

ID Software/GT Interactive, £TBC
Quake?... Quake... Nope, it's gone. I can't really remember what this somewhat obscure little number's all about. But apparently it's quite good.

R43

QUARANTINE 80

Gametek, £39.99
Sort of like Doom on wheels, except the cars don't handle like cars, and it isn't very good. Knock off 20 from the original score.

R29 PD19

RAYMAN 76

Ubisoft, £39.99
Irritating and very unoriginal rsx converted platform game.

R36



REBEL ASSAULT 2 90

LucasArts/VIE, £49.99
Gorgeous graphics, good solid gameplay and 'real' live action footage combine to make another thoroughly enjoyable, pre-rendered shoot 'em up experience for those Star Wars fans among you. It even has a corker of a storyline. But if you loathe and detest the films or thought the first game was a lot of fuss and nonsense about nothing, this won't do anything to win you round.

R35 PD17, 29, 37

RESURRECTION: RISE 2 73

Acclaim/Mirage, £44.99
Nicks some ideas from other beat 'em ups and again looks nice, but still falls short.

R37

RISE OF THE ROBOTS 88

Mirage, £44.99
Side-on beat 'em up of limited moves (and no ability to turn round) complete with lovely muscley cyborgs, that looked nice, but was too generously scored.

R21

RISE OF THE TRIAD 82

US Gold, £12.99
One of the better Doom-alikes in your local gaming emporium, but nowadays that's a bit like being one of the better Pong machine-alikes.

R26 PD26

SHELLSHOCK 60

Eidos Interactive/Core Design, £39.99
rsx arcade tank game conversion. Repetitive and a damn sight more pixelly than one of those Seurat paintings.

R41

SLIPSTREAM 5000 88

Gremlin Interactive, £9.99
Futuristic 3D Hovey racing game that, as well as being top for the solo player, features a split screen two player mode. It's rather like the much-hyped Wipeout - except it runs at a good speed, is very playable with PC controllers, and costs a whole heap less. Racey, pacey, spacey - what a joy.

R27

S.T.O.R.M. 70

Electronic Arts, £39.99
Scramble-lookalike that's very pretty when it comes to graphics, but on the gameplay side is much too hard.

R42

STRIFE 70

Velocity/3DO, £39.99
You can talk to people in it. And it uses the old Doom engi - zzzzz.

R43

SUPER STREETFIGHTER II TURBO 90

Gametek, £39.99
The best sideways-on viewed beat 'em up on the PC. Slick and fast, it's one of the best arcade conversions around. Chun Li's thighs never looked so large, so solid, so... scary.

R27 PD29

TEMPEST 2000 85

Atari, £29.99
A 15-year old Atari game gets a techno soundtrack and suddenly words like 'arcade classic' are being bandied around the office. Whatever next?

R37

TERMINAL VELOCITY 80

US Gold, £12.99
The first of Apogee's 3D Realms games. Fly about in an anti-gravity sort of way, shooting everything in sight on the Magic Carpet-like levels; find the exit tunnel, warp to the next level; continue until bored.

R30 PD31

TERMINATOR: FUTURE SHOCK 85

VIE, £39.99
Shoot 'em up based on the first Terminator film with full freedom of movement in a true three-dimensional world. Look up and down (or die), drive cars, blow the shit out of terminators, robots and flying ships and get lost wandering around the enormous war-torn levels, which are too big for a sodding autopass feature. Hence the decidedly non-classic status.

R35 PD35

TERRA NOVA 90

Virgin, £39.99
Stomping-about-in-robot-suits, shooting-the-crap-out-of-stuff game, from the people behind System Shock. In fact, it plays like System Shock Outdoors. Complex controls and less than stunning sound effects and graphics, but despite these drawbacks is still quite enjoyable.

R39 PD38

TIME COMMANDO 86

Electronic Arts, £44.99
Classy-looking rendered beat/hack/stab/shoot 'em up with nice backgrounds and lots of walking-about bits in which you get whisked to different eras in time to find something that may or may not be some kind of weird computer virus thing. We may never know.

R42



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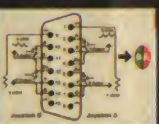
The auto-switch & two-player switch for IBM PC joysticks

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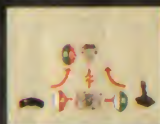
"Best Buy" award in UK CD ROM Today magazine June issue 1995



Utility model



Due to the design of the game port, the IBM PC supports two joysticks (A & B) Each with two fire buttons only. Four button joysticks, and joysticks which have throttle and rudder control or coolie caps, make use of the second joystick (B) controls.



At "two players mode", both joysticks can be activated at the same time for two-player games. However the advanced functions of the joysticks are not supported.



At "one player mode" the AlfaTwin allows you to switch between two joysticks, with all the functions supported, by simply pressing the fire button of the joystick you wish to use.



You can cascade up to three AlfaTwins with four different joysticks for your free selection. Moreover, the six feet long cable brings the AlfaTwin round to the front of your desk, freeing you from the hassle of plugging/unplugging your joystick from the back of the computer.



AlfaCommander Pro

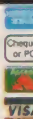


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ALERT: INCOMING SCRAMBLED TRANSMISSION

AGENTS



AGENT REQUESTS BACK-UP
THINK...REACT!



LAUNCH SPY SATELLITE?
THINK...REACT!



COMMUNICATIONS LOST!
THINK...REACT!



C **TIE FIGHTER 94**
Virgin Interactive, £49.99
Follow-up to X-Wing stuffed with loads of new features and more importantly, the chance to succumb to the Dark Side, dress up in some really cool plastic uniforms and shoot the nuts off that arsehole Luke Skywalker. If that's not overstating things.

R18 PD29

TIE FIGHTER: DEFENDER OF THE EMPIRE 73
LucasArts, £19.99
Two new missions and a missile gunboat.

R24

R **TILT 80**
Virgin Interactive, £34.99
Another of the many thousands of pinball games available to people with itchy flipper fingers and no loose change. There are six tables to choose from, and various ways to view them, but it doesn't have the depth of gameplay provided by Pro Pinball: The Web.

R34 PD34

TOMCAT ALLEY 34
Sega, £29.99
Fighter jets in FMV land - repetitive shite. Another hit for Sega's new PC team.

R37

TOTAL MANIA 68
Eidos Interactive/Domark, £39.99
X-COM/Crusader hybrid that looks nice but will bore your arse off.

R41 PD11

C **ULTIMATE DOOM 90**
GT Interactive, £29.99
Doom with an extra episode. Buy Issue 30 and get it for free.

R29 Free upgrade pack 30

R **VIRTUA FIGHTER REMIX 88**
Sega/Datatron, £varies - bundled with Diamond Edge graphics card
Sega's arcade hit comes to your PC, thanks to the wonders of the bundled 3D graphics accelerator card, giving you superb visuals with excellent detail on the fighter sprites (you can practically check who's bothered to pluck that morning and who hasn't). But it doesn't quite match Streetfighter 2 Turbo or Mortal Kombat 3 in the pure playability stakes.

R35

VIRTUA FIGHTER PC 79
Sega PC, £29.99
Same game, but doesn't need the accelerator card and markedly slower as a result.

R42 PD11

R **WARRIORS 85**
Mindscape, £9.99
Frenetic French beat 'em up, just in case you're running out of presents to buy your 12-year-old sibling. It has a Playboy bunny as a hidden character, reasonable graphics and all the usual special moves along with some unusual ones, like grenades. And the obligatory (unhidden) sexy chick has a stonking great tattoo.

R27 PD27

C **WILLIAMS ARCADE CLASSICS 90**
GT Interactive, £29.99
If you really want to use your million-dollar multimedia Pentium to play conversions of prehistoric arcade games that have all the graphical sophistication of a drawing by Stevie Wonder, then this is probably the compilation for you. Arcade-perfect versions of Defender, Robotron 2084, Stargate Defender 2, Joust, Bubbles and Sinistar.

R34 PD Any shareware distributor

WILLIAM SHATNER'S TEKWAR 58
Capstone/US Gold, £39.99
Doom-clone that's as flabby and ineffectual as the man himself.

R35

WING COMMANDER III 62
Electronic Arts, £59.99
Four million dollars' worth of film, linked by the same old tired and crappy space combat stuff.

R23 PD24



R **WING COMMANDER IV 85**
Origin/Electronic Arts, £44.95
The filmed sequences - with real sets and proper actors - cost over \$8,000,000 to make, and it shows. A genuinely absorbing plot with a strong storyline provides the most complete cinematic gaming experience to date. Unfortunately, the gameplay bit is less impressive and it doesn't seem to have advanced at all since the last version. You'll also need a seriously meaty PC to attempt running it.

R35

R **WITCHAVEN 88**
US Gold, £29.99
Doom-style hack 'em up. No jessie-ish firing spells from a safe distance here: it's hand-to-hand combat all the way. Midway between Heretic and Ultima Underworld (but better than Heretic). Similar to Heksen - experience points, goblins, trolls and all that devilish malarkey. Fast, ferocious, and very, very bloody indeed.

R33 PD33

WITCHAVEN 2 72
US Gold, £29.99
More like an add-on disk than a sequel in its own right.

R40

C **X-WING 90**
LucasArts, £44.95
Excellent Star Wars-based space combat game that spawned a myriad of offshoots.

R2 PD17, 29

ADVENTURE

C **ALONE IN THE DARK 3 95**
Infogrames, £34.99 (compilation)
AITD 3 was supposedly the last in the trilogy, except that Time Gate could easily be AITD 4. Available as a budget compilation containing all three AITD games and given the difficulty level, this delivers approximately five years of gameplay for your money. Barg-olal!

R21, 23 PD24

ALIEN ODYSSEY 77
Philips, £44.99
Plodding but pretty adventure; a sort of Bioforce/Cyberia hybrid.

R33 PD33

C **AZRAEL'S TEAR 90**
Mindscape, £44.99
Atmospheric blend of two first-person viewed classics, Ultima Underworld and System Shock, with yet another Knights Templar theme. Engaging, tricky, but ultimately very rewarding.

R39 PD38

R **BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD 87**
Viacom New Media, £39.99
Point-and-click adventure featuring all the

regular characters from the series. Featuring snappy and amusing dialogue, some unusual sub-games (hawking on passers-by, for example) and plenty of puzzle-solving for adventure game traditionalists. Unlikely to appeal if you're not a fan, but a must-buy if you are. Cool.

R35 PD45

BIG RED ADVENTURE 70
Core Design, £39.99
Follow-up to Nippon Safes, only not as bad.

R25 PD24

C **BIOFORCE 95**
Electronic Arts, £44.99
Stunning-looking, action-packed adventure game with built-in unarmed (and armed) combat entirely free of charge. Extremely difficult, and with more gadgets to interact with than an evening at The Torture Garden, its tension derives from the 'race against time scenario'.

R25 PD26

BURIED IN TIME 77
US Gold, £44.99
Technically impressive Journeyman Project sequel that lacks a little gameplay.

R31 PD30

R **BURN-CYCLE 85**
Philips, £44.99
One of the better interactive movie-type adventures. It has good pacing, a sharp plot and plenty of variety in the gameplay. Also wins Most Unlikely Use Of A Colon In Game Title award.

R32

R **BROKEN SWORD 84**
Virgin Interactive, £44.99
'Interactive cartoon' from the team who brought you Beneath A Steel Sky. Gameplay tends toward lengthy conversations thanks to an icon-based speech interface which doesn't allow you to phrase questions yourself. Gorgeous scenery, and well worth a look - more than a match for many of the FMV interactive movies around.

R42

CHRONICLES OF THE SWORD 68
Psychosis, £39.99
Boring adventure puzzler set in the time of King Arthur.

R39

R **COMMANDER BLOOD 81**
Mindscape, £44.99

Nice-looking young chit of a thing, as far as it goes, but it asks a bit too much of the person playing it. It's very weird, like a sort of French Twin Peaks, and it doesn't really give you much idea of what you're supposed to be doing. But it draws you in.

R23

R **COMPANIONS OF XANTH 84**
Accolade, £39.99
Short-lived but diverting adventure - almost as much fun as the Friends of John McCarthy.

R16

CREATURE SHOCK 78
Virgin, £44.99
Pre-rendered shoot 'em up in "fails to score highly shock".

R22 PD22

CYCLONE 78
Mindscape, £44.99
Another Doom clone from the people behind Heretic. You can fly and look up and down, which is bloody marvellous.

R26 PD22

DAEDALUS ENCOUNTER 58
Virgin, £44.99
Tia Carrera's in it. And it's shite

R28

DAGGERFALL 65
Virgin Interactive/Bethesda, £44.95
Attempt at an open-ended D&D jobbie, that ends up just being a jobbie.

R43

C **DARKSEED 90**
Cyberdreams, £44.99
HR Geiger-inspired, challenging adventure with against-the-clock-style gameplay. Macabre - and scarier than a naked Bernard Manning.

R15

R **DARK SUN II: WAKE OF THE RAVAGER 80**
Mindscape, £44.99
Like mostSSI offerings, it's about as graphically sophisticated as the Bayeux Tapestry but AD&D fans will love its RPG roots.

R22

R **DAY OF THE TENTACLE 87**
LucasArts, £39.99
A very taxing adventure with very American humour which isn't quite up to the standard of the classic LucasArts offerings that we are used to.

R7 PD7

R **THE DIG 87**
LucasArts/VIE, £44.99
A return to the good old days of classic point-and-click adventures for LucasArts, although it doesn't actually reach the heights of Indiana Jones, Monkey Island or Sam And Max. A good, involving story, a fair amount of atmosphere, and it's not too difficult to get through.

R4 PD32



C **DISCWORLD 96**
Psychosis, £49.99

A staggeringly high score for this very difficult adventure game based around the books of Terry Pratchett. It's funny, if you like the boy Pratchett's humour. Claims at the time that it was the best adventure ever made seem a trifle over the top now, but it's still extremely entertaining - and very, very hard.

R22 PD23

R **DRAGON LORE 81**
Mindscape, £44.99
Nice-looking, great-sounding pre-rendered adventure with Ultima Underworld-style combat that has you spending an awfully long time walking about in empty scenery, but when it gets going, is quite engrossing. Tricky stuff, though.

R23

DUNGEON MASTER 2 59
Interplay, £44.99
Took its time getting here, and went straight into the bin.

R30



C **ECSTASICA 93**
Psychosis, £44.99

Alone In The Dark-style gameplay with ellipsoid-generated characters, no inventory and a far higher pert buttocks-count. Difficult, with some tricky puzzles, and the constant running away can be wearing until you get some serious pointy weaponry, but still good nonetheless.

R21

ALERT: INCOMING MISSILES DETECTED

AGENTS



LAUNCH FLEET?
THINK...REACT!



RETRIATORY STRIKE?
THINK...REACT!



ASSESS DAMAGE?
THINK...REACT!

PRIORITY: CRITICAL DRAGONIUM LEVELS

CHECK OTHER COLONIES?

THINK... REACT!



CONTACT BLACK MARKET?

THINK... REACT!



TRANSFER ORE
TO SPACE DOCK?

THINK... REACT!

ENTOMORPH 78
Mindscape, £44.99
Good story; lacklustre presentation. A poor man's Ultima VII.

R34 PD33

FRANKENSTEIN: THROUGH THE EYES OF THE MONSTER 79
Interplay, £44.99

Excellent gothic adventure, hampered by extremely dodgy interface.

R34



C FULL THROTTLE 92
LucasArts/Virgin, £44.99

Main biker-guy character has a voice so deep it makes Lee Marvin sound like John Inman. Unfortunately has a god-awful sub-Road Rash arcade beat 'em up on bikes bit in the middle which spoils the flow of the whole thing. That said, it's a cool point-and-clicker.

R27 PD26

C GABRIEL KNIGHT 90
Sierra On-Line, £44.99

The lovely Tim Curry does the voice for the hero in a louche camp style (now there's a surprise) in this tense, and some would say brooding, atmospheric thriller.

R15

GABRIEL KNIGHT 2: THE BEAST WITHIN 88
Sierra, £44.99

Well-acted FMV-based interactive movie with a complex plot that actually has a fair bit of gameplay, although it's not the hardest game you'll ever come across.

R36

C THE GENE MACHINE 87
Vic Tokai, £44.99

Pleasant point-and-clicker in the style of the LucasArts classics, except that it's British. Nice backdrops, a very interesting HG Wells/Jules Verne storyline set in the 19th Century, and humour that will make you smile. Puzzles may be a tad easy for rock-hard adventurers, but immensely enjoyable.

R41

C HARVESTER 83
Virgin Interactive, £39.99

Despite lorry-loads of FMV footage, Harvester provides plenty of traditional, old-fashioned adventure gameplay. Those with sensitive stomachs may find it all a bit gore-tastic; the politically correct may object to the slightly voyeuristic shots of a chick hanging around in suspenders and undies; those who don't care either way will find proper puzzles, an involving plot, and interesting sub-plots.

R42

C INDIANA JONES AND THE FATE OF ATLANTIS 93
LucasArts, £12.99

Budget, all-talkie version of one of the best adventures ever made. Three ways to play, depending on how hard you want to think, whether you like an occasional bout of fisticuffs, or whether you want a bit of help from sidekick Sophia. Still a great game.

R57

C INDIANA JONES AND HIS DESKTOP ADVENTURES 80
LucasArts, £39.99

Weird desktop adventure game-cum Windows 'toy' that you can load whenever you want to try your hand at a number of mini-puzzles featuring the eponymous whip-wielder. You're given a small world, an objective and some hints, and it's up to you to sort things out. So insidious you might well never work again.

R41 PD40

INHERIT THE EARTH QUEST FOR THE ORB 72
US Gold, £39.99

Pretty, LucasArts-style, old-fashioned point-and-clicker.

R18

C KINGDOM O'MAGIC 82
SCI, £44.99

Point-and-click adventure. Can be amusing at times, but would have been better without the stereotypical minorities and the huge-breasted chick. (Actually, the latter is probably a moot point for some of you.)

R38 PD38

C KING'S QUEST VII 93
Sierra, £44.99

Excellent adventure game with some mind-boggling puzzles, marred only by the fact that everyone, even the supposedly evil ogres, tries to be cuter than Hathaway out of ER's top lip. Which is fine for a lip, but slightly squirm-inducing in a computer game character.

R25

C KYRANDIA 3 87
Virgin, £29.99

Good quality adventure, now available as part of the Westwood Studios 10th Anniversary Pack, along with the first two games (Legend Of Kyrandia, Hand Of Fate) and Dune II and Lands Of Lore. Well worth 30 nicker.

R23, 40

LAWNMOWER MAN 77
Sales Curve Interactive, £54.99

Pretty movie, shame about the gameplay.

R15

C LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE 93
Electronic Arts, £44.99

Pretty-looking, gorgeously animated, isometrically-viewed adventure. Quite hard and the auto-save feature can be a complete pain in the arse, but well worth investing some time in.

R21

LOST EDEN 76
Virgin, £34.99

Interactive dinosaur storybook - Jurassic Park meets Dragon Lore.

R25 PD26

NOCTURNALIS 79
Electronic Arts, £44.99

Weird, gothic horror superhero adventure.

R23 PD25

C NORMALITY 90
Gremlin Interactive, £44.99

Ambitious point-and-clicker with first-person viewpoint that can drone on a bit at times but has its fans in the office. The hero's a bit of a dork, but at least it's trying something new.

R38 PD36



C THE PANDORA DIRECTIVE - 92
Virgin/Access, £44.95

The nice-looking follow-up to Under A Killing Moon features the same private dick hero, and is an engrossing, FMV-based adventure with decent puzzles and an absorbing plot. As such, it's rarer than a Bulgarian with a bald back. And as there are three different paths through the game, it's VM as well as FMV. It also comes with a novel based on the game, which, if you read it first (and apparently it's quite good) will spoil it completely.

R43

PHANTASMAGORIA 50
Sierra, £49.99

Interactive movie that somehow forgot all about the interactive bit.

R43

C POLICE QUEST IV: OPEN SEASON 80
Sierra On-Line, £44.99

Another in the long line of procedurally-based cop games. Walk about, take notes, eat doughnuts, beat Rodney King to a bloody pulp. It's all in a day's work at LAPD headquarters.

R19

C POLICE QUEST: SWAT 83
Sierra, £49.99

If you wanna make it as a SWAT Team member, ya gotta practice. And practice. And practice. Gun-toting cop fun, still procedurally heavy but only needs light-gun compatibility to make it perfect.

R36

C PRISONER OF ICE 88
Infogrames, £44.95

The second in Infogrames' Cthulhu-based series of point-and-click adventures; follow up to Shadow Of The Comet. Good plot, good atmosphere.

R29 PD31

C QUEST FOR FAME 80
IBM, £49.95

This music biz-based adventure uses Aerosmith's tunes and has you playing your way from obscurity to megastardom, using a plastic plectrum you can strum on a tennis racket, a spaghetti strainer or even your partner's pubic hair, if you want. Strum well enough to succeed and you'll end up playing with Aerosmith themselves... which may be a mixed blessing.

R35

C REALMS OF ARKANA: STAR TRAIL 85
US Gold, £44.99

You'd never guess from the title, but it's an RPG. Oh, alright then. The sequel to Blade Of Destiny, it's old-fashioned stuff and no mistake: party-forming, spell-casting, isometric scrapping, bosomy damsel ogling... gnarly-fingernailed ones will love it.

R24

C RETURN TO ZORK 90
Activision, £45.99

One of the first good adventures to use FMV footage effectively without compromising any of the gameplay.

R10

C ROBINSON'S REQUIEM 85
Prism, £19.99

Original but flawed survival game in which you utilise your wits, your huge range of prescription drugs and your hand-to-hand combat skills. The only game ever to give you the option to amputate your own limbs.

R16

C SAM AND MAX HIT THE ROAD 93
US Gold, £12.99

An all-time high point in point-and-click adventures. You control the eponymous heroes (a dog and rabbit Freelance Police team) in their pursuit of Trixie the Giraffe-Necked Girl who's been abducted from a freak show. All-talkie with a funny script and a good mix of puzzles. LucasArts at its very best: an essential purchase at this price.

R11, 16 PD17

C SERPENT ISLE: ULTIMA VII PART 2 89
Origin, £34.99

Origin's flair for storytelling and atmosphere makes this a corker of an RPG.

R5

C SHADOW OF THE COMET 88
Virgin White Label, £12.99

Decent all-talkie adventure based on HP Lovecraft's *Cult Of The Cthulhu* books. A case of involving storyline winning out over less than top-notch presentation, but in spite of the odd fault Lovecraft fans will love it.

R18, 38

SILVERLOAD 7
Millennium/Pygnosis, £39.99

That's seven. Out of a hundred. Or approximately £5.71 per point.

R28

C SIMON THE SORCERER 2 84
AdventureSoft, £29.99

Simon the Ginger-Haired, Pony-Tailed Poppy Sorcerer (to give him his full title) returns with DMs and another batch of smart-arsed jokes. Chris Barrie-less (as if anyone cares), it's still a good all-talkie point-and-clicker. Now available in a complete budget package with the prequel and a free (really disgusting) T-shirt.

R30

SPACE QUEST 6 70
Sierra, £44.99

Trite adventure (set... you know where) completely devoid of humour and imagination.

R50



C SPYCHAFT 91
Activision, £49.99

Windows 95-only 'spy simulator'. Unfortunately free of fast cars, birds in swimsuits and spectacular stunts, but loads of FMV and checka with puzzles, spy satellites, devious decoding routines and many many original features. Thoroughly engrossing and jolly good fun.

R48

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE 9 HARBINGER 52
Viacom, £39.99

Even diehard Trekkies won't get much out of this Windows 95-only turkey. (Cue bag loads of whiney letters: "It's not Trekkies, it's Trekkers." Yeah, right.)

R49

STAR TREK: JUDGEMENT RITES 70
Virgin Interactive, £12.99

Kirk era point-and-clicker with lots of space combat thrown in.

R77



C STAR TREK TNG: A FINAL UNITY 94
MicroProse, £49.99

There are verily shitloads of Star Trek adventure games, but this one, it has to be said, is the best. If you're the kind of person who likes sticking a pasty on your forehead and prancing about with your trousers tucked in your chelsea boots, this is the one for you.

R27 PD27

STONEKEEP 76
Interplay, £44.99

Dated flick-screen RPG, best kept under a stone. Arf arf.

R55 PD33

C SYSTEM SHOCK 95
Electronic Arts/Origin, £11.99

Wonderful, atmospheric, first-person viewed action adventure game with a cyberpunk

LIFE IS FRAGILE

FRAGILE
ALLEGIANCE



DEEP SPACE
INTENSE STRATEGY

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tinge. Basically, it's like *Ultima Underworld* in space. And available on budget.

R20 PD21 28

R TIME GATE 84 Infogrames, £44.99

From the team that, in the past, brought you the *Alone In The Dark* series comes a game that looks remarkably like *Alone In The Dark*. Knights Templar-based fun, with all the joys – and of course the faults – of *Alone In The Dark* 1-3.

R36 PD36

C ULTIMA UNDERWORLD 2: LABYRINTH OF WORLDS 94

Origin, £44.95
Superb, first-person viewed adventure that's never been matched.

R1

UNDER A KILLING MOON 70 US Gold, £12.99

Interactive movie on four CDs featuring Margot Kidder, James Earl Jones, loads of acting, a lot of digitised backgrounds and, just about detectable, the faintest whiff of gameplay.

R19 PD19

R VORTEX 80 Warner Interactive, £39.99

Interactive movie? Or game? Only Our Lord Baby Jesus can really tell.

R29 PD30

ZORK NEMESIS 65 Activision, £44.99

Return To Zork follow-up abandons any sort of gameplay entirely and instead, opts for a Myst-like approach.

R39

DRIVING

R BIG RED RACING 87 Domark, £39.99

Very much like a first-person perspective *Micro Machines*, it has you haring about all over the shop in lots of different wacky vehicles (snow ploughs, monster trucks etc) – and you can even recreate *The Italian Job* in a mini.

R37 PD40



C DESTRUCTION DERBY 90 Sony Interactive, £44.99

A cross between a racing game and smash 'em up where you chalk up more points for wrecking opponents' cars than for winning a race. Great graphics and initially exhilarating, but one-player gameplay isn't the deepest you'll ever find. Plenty of network options, though.

R33 PD34

R F1 GRAND PRIX MANAGER 85 MicroProse, £44.99

Comprehensive simulation that has you hanging from your Ron Dennis 'standing up' frame and managing a Formula 1 team through an on-going Championship, taking charge of everything from tyre deals and team sponsorship to the hiring and firing of prima-donna drivers. Guaranteed absolute F1 anorak heaven.

R34 PD38

C FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX 92 MicroProse, £14.99

The classic F1 racing game, now available in a number of compilations or on its own. Still great after all these years.

C FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX 95 MicroProse, £30.00

Superb upgrade to the classic racing game with menus and set-up screens to tinker about with to your heart's content, and the game engine is unmatched anywhere. To get the textured graphics in all their full glory you're going to need a decent Pentium, but it still looks very good and is playable even in low-res.

R36

R FATAL RACING 88 Gremlin Interactive, £39.99

Full-contact arcade driving game like a cross between *Ridge Racer* and the ancient Amiga classic, *Stunt Car Racer*. Excellent graphics and 16 tracks, some of which are spectacular. Unfortunately, it looks crap on anything less than a Pentium.

R39 RD33

R HI-OCTANE 83

Anti-gravity racing game based on the *Magic Carpet* engine with lots of shooting of opponents, but a disconcertingly short view ahead of your car/truck/hoverly thing (just like in *Magic Carpet*, in fact).

R29 PD29

C INDYCAR RACING 93 Virgin Interactive, £9.99

Definitive simulation of the art of racing about in circles with almost all the same ingredients as the sequel; now available on budget in a number of compilations or on its own for a tenner.

R10 RD10

C INDYCAR RACING EXPANSION PACK 94 Virgin Interactive, £17.99

Five excellent extra tracks (and one more roundabout) for your collection. Of course, it would have been nice if they'd been in the original game.

R19



C INDYCAR 2 90 Papyrus/Virgin, £34.99

Follow-up to the first oval circuit racing game which really doesn't add much to the original. It does have glorious VGA graphics, but if you already possess *IndyCar 1*, there's little reason to buy this, as well as *FIGP2* instead.

R34 PD34

MEGARACE 2 - 79 Mindscape, £44.95

An improvement on the original (which, lets face it, isn't hard) but there are loads of better driving games around – and they aren't "on rails".

R43

C MICRO MACHINES 2 93 Codemasters, £44.99

Brilliant sequel with different tracks and the same instant appeal. Also comes complete with a nifty little track designer that enables you to race across the naked body of your mother (or something).

R29 PD29

R NASCAR RACING 84 Virgin, £44.99

Roundabout racing in armour-plated saloon cars from the people who brought you *IndyCar*.

R23 PD22

R NEED FOR SPEED 89 Electronic Arts, £44.99

Race extremely expensive cars down the longest stretches of highway in America without a turn-off, skid about to leave

rubber on the road, crash spectacularly... then do it all again. Or look at the multimega bits, showing how obscenely expensive your car really is. 3D-style crash and burn action comes to the PC.

R31 PD31

R SCREAMER 89 VIE, £29.99

Good-looking, fast-moving arcade driving game with six different tracks, six different supercars, manual or automatic options and three different skill levels. Very arcadey approach, down to the time bonuses on stages. Unfortunately, this also means that you can't go round the circuits the wrong way or get up to any of the other zany things wacky characters love. Good stuff, though.

R33 PD35

SPEED HASTE 79 Electronic Arts, £29.99

Cross between *Virtua Racing* and *Daytona* – but not as good.

R38 PD47

R SUPERKARTS 82 Virgin Interactive, £29.99

The PC's attempt at *Super Mario Kart*, now available (with *IndyCar Racing* and *FIGP 1*) on the White Lines compilation. Fast-moving, arcade action all the way, complete with a network option.

R24 PD19

TRACK ATTACK 65 MicroProse, £29.99

Abysmally slow-moving arcade racer with dodgy controls.

R39

R TEAM F1 88 Electronic Arts, £39.99

F1 management game that's even more comprehensive than *FIGP Manager*. Starting from scratch, you are responsible for everything from bank loans, R&D, sponsors, wind tunnel and engine testing through to office expansion, manufacturing contracts and even industrial espionage. A bit fiddly and confusing, especially as it's played against the clock, but well worth the slog all the same.

R42

VIRTUAL KARTS 71 MicroProse, £44.95

Featuring karts that handle like supertankers, in hi-res jerko-vision.

R35 PD37

WIPEOUT 78 Sony Interactive, £44.99

Ineffectual conversion of top PlayStation anti-gravity racing game.

R34

PUZZLES

THE 7TH GUEST 60 Trilobyte, £44.99

Gorgeous-looking puzzle game with weak gameplay in the style of *Myst*.

R4

THE 11TH HOUR 67 Trilobyte/VIE, £49.99

Follow-up to *7th Guest* with more puzzles in fancy settings.

R35

ALL NEW WORLD OF LEMMINGS 78 Digital Integration, £39.99

Except it isn't really that new.

R22

C BAKU BAKU ANIMAL 90 Sega PC, £29.99

Sega's PC boys finally come good in a big way with the coolest puzzle game around. *Tetris* or *Puyo Puyo*-style play has you matching up cutesy animals and their food to clear the screen. Great fun in single-player, with a fab two-player single-screen

option and a kicking soundtrack, it's more addictive than crack.

R42

R THE EVEN MORE INCREDIBLE MACHINES 89 Dynamix, £39.99

More top-notch puzzling fun with sprockets and cogs.

R10 PD22

R FURY OF THE FURRIES 85 Mindscape3, £39.99

Interesting platform puzzler, not for the easily frustrated.

R12

R THE INCREDIBLE MACHINES 84 Dynamix, £39.99

Manipulate and arrange *Mousetrap*-style combinations of gadgets, tools and bits and pieces from the nether regions of your shed to set up chain reactions and solve puzzles. Enjoyable stuff.

R22

LEMMINGS 3D 71 Psygnosis, £39.99

Same game, different angle.

R31 PD29

C LITL DVL 90 Gremlin, £34.99

Excellent puzzle game with an element of adventuring, put together with wit and considerable flair.

R12 18 PD16

MONTY PYTHON AND THE HOLY GRAIL 69 7th Level, £39.99

Mildly diverting, if over-familiar, puzzle-based interactive picture book of the film. Sort of.

R42

MYST 67 Electronic Arts, £44.99

Puzzle game set amid pretty backdrops. Mac owners like it.

R15 RD16

R SHANGHAI N: DRAGON'S EYE 88

Excellent collection of Mah Jongg games for Windows, featuring different set-ups for the tiles.

R17

R SOLITAIRE'S JOURNEY 87 Mirage, £44.99

105 different solitaire card games and five different ways to play them, for people with no friends in the entire world.

R8

SIMULATION

R 1942: PACIFIC AIR WAR 89 MicroProse, £44.99

Takes the decent naval strategy game *Carrier Battles* and adds a full-blown flight sim with pretty good flight models so that you can fly the missions yourself. Blimey O'Reilly – two games in one.

R17

C ACES OF THE DEEP 90 Dynamix/Sierra, £39.99

Superb U-Boat simulation that's got the lot: the unbearable tension; the long silences; the smell of other people's armpits in recycled air; the chance to torpedo shipfuls of Scouse babies. Who in their right mind could ask for more?

R29

C AH-64 LONGBOW 90 Electronic Arts, £44.99

Great-looking chopper sim with good music and a great interface that tries to be a game before anything else. Be warned: even on a P133 it can go all jerko in hi-res, and it needs 97Mb hard disk space. And there's no network play either. But it looks and plays absolutely fab.

R30

R AIR POWER 84 Mindscape, £44.99

Another flight sim set in a parallel universe from Rowan, combining between the war-type aircraft with a fantasy strategy game in which you have to use planes, launched from airships, to take over the country.

R30 PD31



C APACHE LONGBOW 96 Digital Integration, £39.99

The best helicopter flight model around – which means it's remarkably easy to roast your bony ass in a collision with Mother Earth. Nothing comes close to matching it for authenticity, tactical planning and spot-on handling. Flat-shaded polygon graphics won't exactly wow you though, and if it's arcade thrills and spills you want, go for *Comanche* vs *Werewolf*.

R31 PD30

R ARMORED FIST 86 US Gold/Novologic, £29.99

The good-looking, sophisticated tank sim that sounds like a very scary sex aid. *Comanche* on wheels. Er, tracks. You know what we mean.

R22

C ATF 92 Electronic Arts, £44.99

Take a seriously spruced-up *US Navy Fighters* engine combined with a large number of 'conceptual' planes with different flight models; add an interactive reference guide courtesy of Jane's and a complex mission-building option and you get a seriously good flight sim for propeller-heads everywhere.

R38

C COMANCHE 90 Novologic, £29.99

Great-looking, arcade chopper action. Now available on *World Of Combat* compilation, with *Armored Fist* and *Wolfpack*.

R16

R COMANCHE VS WEREWOLF 88 Novologic/US Gold, £39.99

Take the original *Comanche* chopper game, then chuck in all the add-on missions and a completely new extra game which lets you play two-player modem or serial-link-up battles. Not the best flight model around, propeller-head purists will sneer, but it's a jolly good arcade blast with some mighty fine graphics.

R33

R DAWN PATROL 80 Empire Interactive, £44.99

Nice-looking WWI flight sim that lays claim to being an 'interactive book'. In other words, you sit through a lot of other garbage between dogfights.

R21 PD21

C EF2000 97 Ocean/DID, £49.99

The flight sim with something for everyone, from complex missions in an on-going war scenario to jump-right-in-and-start-blasting arcade thrills. Based on a plane that isn't even finished yet, the flight model's so good they're using it to train pilots. But you can make things as easy as you like, and the graphics are fab too.

R31 PD32

R F14 FLEET DEFENDER 86 MicroProse, £44.99

Heavyweight flight sim; *Tornado* is better.

R15

R FAST ATTACK 86 Sierra, £39.99

Ultra-complex but extremely rewarding Windows 95-only submarine sim. Newcomers to the genre might find it a bit too much of a mare to deal with, so don't come running to us if you suddenly find your ship sinking.

R39

C FLIGHT SIMULATOR 9 90 Microsoft, £35.00

Great-looking simulation that actually teaches you how to fly. Lovers of mayhem will find it low on baby carriage/napalm interaction.

R8

R HORNET NAVAL STRIKE FIGHTER 80 Spectrum Holobyte, £44.99

Electronic Battlefield System (EBS) add-on for *Falcon 3*, allowing you to fly eponymous plane in network scraps or alternatively, in standalone missions.

R15



C HMD 90 Digital Integration, £44.99

It's from DI, so you already know it's going to be a seriously heavy simulation. The emphasis is on hyper-realism rather than flashy, memory-hungry presentation so it will run on low-spec machines, but it's harder than juggling atoms. Loads of multiplayer options though (serial link-up, modem and network play) so you can die among friends.

R40

R KA-50 HOKUM 85 Virgin, £39.99

Excellent helicopter flight sim based around the ubiquitous, extremely effective Russian chopper. Very realistic and therefore very hard to fly properly.

R20

C NAVY STRIKE 90 Empire Interactive, £44.99

Two games in one: a flight sim, where you pilot a jet fighter in the slightly scary future, and a military command sim. Very atmospheric, it's one that grows on you the more you play it.

R33

R PACIFIC STRIKE 80 Electronic Arts, £39.99

Good stuff. *Strike Commander* game engine and graphics, but set in WWII Pacific campaign. Needs a P90 to run smoothly.

R15

C REDSHIFT 95 Maris Multimedia, £59.00

A stunning astronomy program crammed full with still photographs and video sequences that even lets you stand, for example, on the surface of Pluto and gaze at the stars. And no, we do not mean the cast of *Emmerdale*.

R15

R SEA WOLF 83 Electronic Arts, £44.99

Hugely atmospheric submarine sim with a control interface from hell.

R15

C SILENT HUNTER 90 SSI/Mindscape, £39.99

Superb WWII sub sim that's got the lot: cat-and-mouse stuff, creaking hulls, big explosions, depth charge attacks, blokes in

chunky polo-neck sweaters... Superb, atmospheric stuff.

R40

SILENT THUNDER 60 Sierra, £39.99

Nice-looking follow-up to *A10 Tank Killer*, in stunning jerko-vision.

R39 PD37

SPACE SIMULATOR 75 Microsoft, £39.99

It simulates space. Which is probably over-reaching itself a bit. Get *RedShift* instead.

R21

C SU27 FLANKER 95 Mindscape, £44.95

Comprehensive flight sim based on the scariest aircraft ever built. Features the best flight model around, developed with input from top Russian pilots, but has less than dazzling graphics. Aimed at serious propeller-heads rather than those seeking lightweight thrills and spills (the instrument

THE MAGAZINE FOR MEN

MAXIM

NOVEMBER 1996 £2.50

PURE SEX!

Is Caprice the world's hottest blonde? (You're the jury, p16)

HOW TO...
Manage your boss
Train for the marathon
Stop your car getting nicked
Brew your own-label beer

CAN YOU TELL A VIRGIN FROM A TART?
 Test your skills, p72

'WHOSE LEG IS THIS ANYWAY?'
 The war training course from hell

WIN THE NEW RENAULT MAXIM!
 (So good, they named it after us)

PLUS! R.E.M.: ALBUM OF THE YEAR?... RENE RUSSO ... ELMORE LEONARD... DENZEL WASHINGTON... BILL WYMAN... SAM SHEPARD... MEG RYAN

On sale 3 October

IAN BOTHAM INTERNATIONAL CRICKET 70

Beam, £34.99

For those of you gagging for a PC cricket sim, this is a good, playable conversion of SNES hit, with unnecessary and crap FMV footage.

R37

R INTERNATIONAL TENNIS OPEN 88

Philips, £44.99

The PC's premier tennis game boasts FMV players, but also has an idiosyncratic control system which is rather too difficult to come to terms with - so much so that you have the option of not even playing the shots yourself.

R17

R JIMMY WHITE'S WHIRLWIND SNOOKER 80

Hit Squad, £14.99

Still the best snooker game around on the PC after all these years.

R16

KICK OFF 3: EUROPEAN CHALLENGE 70

Anco, £29.99

The best Kick Off game to date - which isn't saying much.

R24

C LINKS LS 94

EIDOS Interactive, £44.95

The long-awaited re-vamp to the world's greatest golf sim gives you more gameplay options, even more gorgeous graphics and a re-designed menu and view-selection system, making it better than ever. No other software house else has managed to get a golf ball moving as realistically around a screen as it does in this. Thankfully it includes a built-in upgrader for all those old data-disk courses you spent your well-earned wodge on in the distant past.

R43

C NBA LIVE 95 90

EA, £34.99

Good basketball sim, presented in FIFA isometric style. Pre-Virtual Stadium, so the crowd looks good too.

R26

R NBA LIVE 96 85

EA, £44.99

Basketball gets the Virtual Stadium treatment: multiple angles for each camera, an expanded polystyrene crowd, three levels of difficulty and all the usual season play options. A touch muted graphically, and can be just a little bit confusing when it gets crowded.

R57



C NHL HOCKEY '96 90

Electronic Arts, £44.99

EA's ice hockey game gets its annual upgrade of stats and player names along with its own Virtual Stadium, complete with unconvincing crowd. Excellent animation and multiple camera angles. Fine detailing means the players even have little reflections on the ice. Controlled violence has never been so pretty.

R32 PD34

R OVERLORD 85

Virgin Interactive, £39.99

WWII flight sim based around - you guessed it - Operation Overlord (also known as the D-Day landings). Features mainly ground attack missions with the odd dog fight or bomber intercept, has two padlock views (count 'em) and some decent little flight models.

R17

C PGA TOUR GOLF 88 91

Electronic Arts, £34.99

Excellent-looking, great-playing, fine-smelling golf game, available in the Essential Collections: Sport compilation with FIFA Soccer and FIGP.

R20

C PGA TOUR '96 94

Electronic Arts, £44.99

Two different courses, and new Links-inspired windows that provide extra views of the action. Main view graphics now look less sharp than last year's model but give more sense of depth. If you're not that bothered about having the latest version, last year's game is cheaper, has more courses and loses nothing in gameplay.

R32 PD37

C PGA EUROPEAN TOUR 94

Electronic Arts, £44.99

Finally, a game featuring the people who won the Ryder Cup rather than the also-rans. A different development team has tweaked the ball physics so it responds better to the contours, which makes it the best arcade golf game around at the moment. And it's Yank-free.

R38

SENSIBLE WORLD OF SOCCER 80

Warner Interactive, £39.99

Delayed so long that by the time it came out the world had moved on.

R34 PD33

R TWIN BASS TOURNAMENT 80

Electronic Arts, £39.99

Fishing tournament game that's more to do with amassing money than the joy of hooking big floppy gilled things and dragging them about for fun. Trophy Bass is better.

R39

R TROPHY BASS 85

Sierra, £39.99

Near-perfect simulation of the noble art, concerned more with the purity of thought and deed than the baser elements of money-grabbing tournaments. Comes with a voucher for a free bag of chips.

R38

C VIRTUAL POOL 91

Interplay, £44.99

Superbly implemented pool sim with intuitive controls and a multi-player network option. As close to real pool as you can get, apart from the little piles of coins on the side of the table. (And only 90 times the price.)

R28 PD27

VIRTUAL SNOOKER 60

Interplay, £34.99

Identical to Virtual Pool, only with more balls and FMV of a Steve Davis 147 break. Coma time.

R38 PD38

STRATEGY

R ACROSS THE RIVER 86

MicroProse, £44.99

Tank-based battle strategy game which takes a while to come to terms with thanks to a heavy-duty manual and a less-than-intuitive multi-view interface. Complete lack of hexes, lots of digitised footage of tanks and tankers. Great depth if you can get your head round it.

R30

R AFTERLIFE 88

Virgin/LucasArts, £44.99

God game modelled on Sim City in which you actually play God, 'zoning' areas of punishment and reward for the souls who come under your charge. Liberal helpings of humour, along with good longevity in the gameplay, mean you don't have to be Billy Graham to enjoy it either. Things to do in Sim City when you're dead.

R40 PD39

R AIV NETWORKS 80

Infogrames, £44.99

A business sim that throws you in at the deep end of corporation management. Not nearly as easy to get into as the Maxis titles, unless you're a budding mover and shaker who doesn't do lunch.

R30

R ALIEN LEGACY 80

Sierra On-Line, £39.99

Another of the several million space strategy games vying for your dosh, but one of the better ones. A bit like a cheaper version of Outpost without the pretty bits. Daunting at first, but rewards time spent on it and becomes quite addictive.

R20

R ALLIED GENERAL 83

SSI/Mindscape, £44.99

Windows 95-based follow-up to the hugely successful Panzer General that should appeal to wargamers and casual dilettantes alike. One or two faults, but its simplicity should appeal.

R37 PD38

C ASCENDANCY 93

Virgin, £39.99

Take all the bits you loved from just about every strategy, god or warfare game, set it in the context of space exploration and planetary conquest, and you get Ascendancy. Get stuck into this and you can kiss goodbye to your social life, career and an acceptable level of personal hygiene. (Assuming you have any of these in the first place.)

R32

R BATTLEGROUND ARDENNES 84

Empire Interactive, £40.00

Serious and deep, deep strategy game that's the first to be designed exclusively for Windows 95. Dragging war games into the 90s? Whatever next? Good graphics?

R36 PD34

R BATTLEGROUND GETTYSBURG 87

Empire Interactive, £39.99

Second in the Windows 95-based series. An excellent feel for the Gettysburg battles, complete with Quicktime movies and a Quick Start guide, but it needs 130MB of hard disk space for a full installation, or 60MB for a minimum. Which is quite a lot.

R37 PD39

BATTLEGROUND WATERLOO 74

Empire Interactive, £39.99

Third in the series. More views and unit types, but dumber AI. Still no scenario editor.

R32



C BATTLE ISLE 3: SHADOW OF THE EMPEROR 93

Blue Byte, £45.99

Third in the series of highly respected and very popular strategic battle games. Worth checking out if you like your strategy with a futuristic bent (ie your army jumper has silver patches on the elbows and shoulders).

R33 PD36

R BEDLAM - 89

Mirage, £7BC

Take a range of isometrically viewed city levels, and add a dinky little armoured HIRC, with more weapons of destruction at its disposal than the average aircraft carrier, and you have a highly addictive blasterama that's like Syndicate for the impatient, with weapon power-ups rather than an R&D team.

R43 PD42

C BUZZ ALDRIN'S RACE INTO SPACE 95

Interplay, £39.99

Strategy game revolving around the USA/USSR great space race. You can be either side if you want, you snivelling pinko.

R14



C CIVILIZATION II 90

MicroProse, £44.99

Enhanced sequel in full 3D which can make things cluttered at times, especially if you have a number of windows open. Combat's been tightened up, with new units and 'hit points', and even experienced Civ players will find there's a lot to learn. (Note: Windows 95 or 3.1 with WinG only.)

R36 PD40

R CIVIL WAR 83

Empire Interactive, £44.99

The sequel to Fields of Glory, it's the second-best American Civil War battle strategy game. Just to be annoying, we're not telling you what is the best one. You'll have to go and find it yourself.

R29

R CYBERJUGGS 80

Empire Interactive, £39.99

Political strategy game in which you play the President of the United States (no, not the band), complete with an interface that lets you access every country in the world. Set up trade agreements, negotiate peace settlements, track down traitors in your midst, or just shag beauty queens. Intriguing if you're into political shenanigans; snore city if you're not.

R41

C COLONIZATION 90

MicroProse, £44.99

Civilization I with more depth and better graphics, released to make a quick buck until Civ 2 appeared. Allegedly.

R60

C COMMAND & CONQUER 95

Virgin, £44.99

Take the strategy and resource management of Dune 2, add the fast-paced, real-time combat of Cannon Fodder, intelligent grunts, a myriad of weapons, and the exploration elements of Civilization and you have a hugely addictive game.

R38 LE36 PD37

R COMMAND & CONQUER: COVERT OPERATIONS 84

Virgin, £14.99

Seriously difficult add-on missions for anyone who thinks they're a bit of a C&C whizz.

R38

CONQUEST OF THE NEW WORLD 75

Interplay, £44.99

Slow, cumbersome strategy game about... well, would you believe... conquering the New World.

R39 PD36

R CYBERSTORM - 85

Sierra, £44.95

Interesting turn-based space exploration game boasting a Dune-ish plot, with you building robots to mine ore from different planets in competition with other companies. Resource management a-go-go and worth a look, as long as you have the patience and can bear full-scale battles that will take only slightly less time than the Ice Age.

R43

It's all change at *Zone* this month. Jon's retreated into his own world to play with *Excel*, and left me, Chris and new boy Paul to play in the *Zone* sandpit. Keep your letters a comin' and watch out for that cat shit.

— **Jeremy Wells**



(Above) *Hind* is on the way – just don't hold your breath!

BE-HIND SCHEDULE?

Where the hell is *Hind*? You reviewed it a few months ago and it's still not out. Is it ever coming out?

Malcolm James, Hove

Hind was originally due for release back in June/July, hence the cover review in *PC Zone*. At the time Digital Integration assured us that the game was 99.9 per cent finished and ready to face up to the rigours of review. The plan being that the game would be finished and in the shops the month the review hit the streets.

After taking on board some of our comments (which were raised in the review) regarding the AI (artificial intelligence) of the infantry and some of the mission structures, they decided to hold back the release of the game in order to implement some improvements. Unfortunately (as is often the case) when DI started tweaking one area of the game, another started to sprout bugs (just as the new collisions demanded by the American market and implemented by Geoff Crammond to FIGP2 caused other parts of the game to fall over, which meant it was delayed).

Then as things started to come together, summer arrived and DI decided to hold over the release until the autumn as, like so many other publishers, they believe that people don't buy PC games during the summer months. Which brings us up to date (sort of).

The good news is that DI now plan to release the game by the end of October "at the very latest" and that there's now a new playable demo available which shows off the improved AI and missions. You'll also be able to play head-to-head PC versus Mac. Hopefully, the final release will be even better than the game we reviewed and completely bug-free. Hopefully.

Contact Digital Integration on 01276 684 959 for an up-date and the demo.



Letter of the month

Z NOT FOR EVERYONE

I want to talk about the best real-time strategy game of 1996, the game that'll keep you up for weeks on end, the game to finally knock *Command & Conquer* off its pedestal... but I can't, so I'm gonna have to talk about Bitmap Brothers' *Z* instead. I, like a great many people out there, have been awaiting the release of this game for quite some time, but even so, the numerous 'finger burnings' suffered when buying software, convinced me not to rush out and buy it without some form of recommendation. The legend "92% – Like *C&C* only harder, more strategic and more intense" then flashed passed my eyes.

This was the game for me! I rushed out... I bought it... And it wasn't! Now, I was exactly the sort of person your review was aimed at. I loved *C&C* and have completed it playing both sides. I wanted more of a challenge. The fact that there were only 20 levels discouraged me at first but then I saw, "You may well see yourself as a bit of a whizz at this sort of game (that's me!) and think that, with only 20 levels, you'll finish it pretty quickly (yep!). You won't". I did. I completed the final level within two days of buying the game. *C&C* took the best part of a month to finish playing both sides.

Harder? I think not. More strategic? Well it tries to be, but that doesn't really work either. I have found that the game is won or lost within the first couple of minutes of each level. With *C&C*, both sides had a chance to build up their forces & defences, and choose when and where to attack. In *Z*, if you are losing after the first couple of minutes – you're gonna lose! There's no real chance to reverse the fortunes of war after an initial setback, which is surely what makes a game strategic. Because of this, you find yourself re-playing the start of each level time and time again to get a decent starting position, and this makes the game very

92% proof but not to everyone's taste according to freaky Neal Sinclair.

repetitive. I understand that you can't write a review that everyone's going to agree with, but being that this review was aimed specifically at *C&C* players I was a bit disappointed.

Neal Sinclair – neals@globalnet.co.uk
PS Anyone wanna buy a copy of *Z*? Hardly used? Anyone? Anyone?

Okay, so you didn't like *Z* very much. We did. In fact everybody in the office did. Even the people from Metal Hammer next door stayed late to play it (and how uncool is it for a rock journal to do that?). This is very (very) rare. Most of us found it no walkover either. You're either a gaming wizard or a bit of a freak. Maybe both.

You do raise a few valid points though, but ultimately you've got to consider that *Z* is not a *C&C* sequel, but a completely new game, with different gameplay and objectives. As a result it requires different tactics and a different approach. We found it to be a lot quicker and a lot more intense than *C&C*, especially when played over a network against three other players. The review wasn't specifically aimed at *C&C* players, but at people who like strategy games, and maybe those who wouldn't play them normally, because *Z* is perhaps more accessible than most.

Ultimately, the Bitmaps set themselves up (just a bit) by putting the release date back further and further until everyone was so hyped up that consequently it was always going to be a bit of a disappointment to some people. You obviously fall into that group.

What do the rest of you think?



IS THE X-FILES OUT THERE?

What's all this I hear about an *X-Files* game? Eh? Eh? When is it going to be released? I must know! Give Me Details! Now!

And where's old Culkus hiding, 'cause I ain't seen him on any CDs lately isn't it? Bring him back NOW!

An *X-Files* fanatic, Diss

Fox Interactive announced that they were working on an *X-Files* game at the E3 trade show in the States last May. As far as we know, it features original 'never seen before' footage starring both David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson. Chris Carter (the show's creator) has been 'heavily involved' with the whole project. Although no firm release date has been set, Fox maintain that we can



(Left) Any old excuse to print another photo of Gillian Anderson.

(Right) Just bask in the full glory of *F-22 Lightning II* – it's out next month – promise!



even find it more difficult. Not that we're calling him a w**ker or anything. Not for a moment. Just a smart arse.

ANORAKS AHOY!

Hi. In your September issue there was a Blueprint of *F22 Lightning II* which included a section asking "Remember *F-22 Lightning*?" The gist was that this game was the sequel to nothing. Like *Star Wars*.

I suggest that the 'II' refers to the plane, and is not chronological notation for the progression of *F22* games. If you look in any big, colourful books with lots of pictures of fighters, you'll see the *A-10 Tank Buster* referred to as the *Thunderbolt II* just as the *F22* is referred to as the *Lightning II*. This is simply not to confuse the *A-10* with the *F37 Thunderbolt* and the *F22* with the *F38 Lightning*. (I think).

I hope this clears up Warren Christmas's bewilderment.

Christopher Gouldstone – D2ydx2@aol.com

(The proud winner of February's *PC Zone* Competition)

My, you really know your aircraft (unlike our very own Wazza it would seem). A quick chinwag with NovaLogic confirmed your investigations.

Apparently, the Lockheed *F38 Lightning* was the first aeroplane developed from the start as a military type by Lockheed and was the only American fighter built before World War II to be still in production on VJ Day. The *Lightning* was used in all US combat zones as a high and low altitude fighter, fighter escort, bomber, photo recon aircraft, low-level attack and rocket fighter and smokescreen layer.

It was generally considered to be a rather fantastic all-rounder, just as the new *Lightning II* is being hyped as the greatest thing with two wings since... er, the first *Lightning*. So, you're right.

TWO-PLAYER TRAUMAS

What do I have to do to get two game pads or joysticks to work with my PC? I've tried one of those splitter things but I can never get all the buttons to work. Consequently, whenever I play a

(Right) It's possible to play *FX Fighter* with two gamepads, but it will cost you.



two player game, such as *FX Fighter* or *Actua*, one of us has to use the keyboard which is just unfair. Don't tell me it isn't possible, or I'll sell my Pentium and buy a 200 quid console.

Jeffrey Root, Wimbledon

It is possible to use two gamepads, though it can be an effort. Splitters don't always work with gamepads as there are simply too many inputs to cope with. The easiest way to get two gamepads working on your PC is to invest in either the Gravis GRiP which can handle up to four pads (contact Gravis Holland: 0031365364443) or the new Microsoft Sidewinder gamepad (reviewed on page 127 – which allows you to daisy-chain up to four pads. It's not the cheapest way to do it, but it's the easiest. They're both nice pads too. Z)

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Don't forget to check out the PC Zone CIX conference if you're on-line.

If your letter is selected as 'Letter of the Month' we'll send you a bundle of T-shirts and maybe even a game. COO!

NB: *PC Zone* retain the right to completely edit, re-write and change completely all correspondence in order to make them even more smug, funny and witty.



(Below) *Command & Conquer*, just perfect for those tumescent evenings.



Mr Cursor

THE REASON I'M AFRAID OF MONEY is quite simple... I haven't got any. If I was rolling in the stuff I'd no doubt love it to death, and would subsequently buy dedicated magazines, with titles like Money Monthly or Dosh Illustrated. (They'd be very expensive magazines, you understand, so poor people couldn't afford them).

But like I say, I'm skint – as I was explaining last week to a bloke I call Captain Lottery, who resides on the same storey of the crappy South London towerblock where I live in squalor. We were waiting for the lift. I call him Captain Lottery, incidentally, because all he ever talks about are his lottery numbers...

Capitalist Spiritualism

In the continual search for methods of making cash from not much actual work – and realising that even if my 'syndicate' with Captain Lottery comes good he won't give me a share of the winnings – I've fallen back on the old favourite: start a religion. The religion I've got in mind is for people who like the idea of being a Buddhist but who, for obvious reasons, don't want to denounce all their worldly belongings (and all that malarkey). If you want to be a Virtual Buddhist then simply send £9.99 to Mr Cursor at the usual PC Zone address, and you will receive, by return of post, a membership number and a poster. The poster, which should be placed on your bedroom wall (above your bed), looks like this...

"I got two right on Saturday," he said, somewhat predictably. I knew he was about to tell me which ones they were, too: "One was a 12 and the other was a 16."

"Oh," I said.

"Yes," he continued, telling me his other four, and explaining how the overall 'pattern' was right, but that it just happened to be in the wrong place.

"A stroke of bad luck," I said. I was willing the lift to appear.

"I'm getting nearer the big one every week, though, innit!" he announced confidently. "You do the lottery yourself, do ya?"

"Not generally, no," I said. "I'm too skint most of the time."

"Skint? Skint?" yelled Captain Lottery, as if he'd stubbed a toe, "You can't be too skint to do the lottery, mate. That ain't no excuse! What are ya talkin' abart? You ain't gettin' away with that!"

Disaster. I now had to justify not doing the lottery to someone who believed in it as if it were a religion. It's worth mentioning that Captain Lottery, although a tragic sado, is also about 10 feet tall and built like a brick shithouse. In his eyes I was now a blaspheming little infidel.

"If you want money you gotta spend money," he snarled, angrily.

He's afraid of... Money

"But it's the odds," I said reasonably. "They're hard to grasp at a gut level, I know, but I wrote this computer programme which simulates 10 draws a second. It does graphs and stuff. I left it running all night once, and the next morning I hadn't even won the £100,000 bonus ball prize."

"So? So what? What the feck does that mean? You're winding me up, pal!"

I explained – trying hard not to sound patronising – that this 'overnight simulation' was the equivalent, in real terms, of 360,000

I decided, to placate him with a load of arse. (Something I should have done in the first place.)

"I had to sell the computer," I said. "I got behind with the rent."

"Oh yeah?" he replied, suspiciously.

"Mind you," I added quickly, "I often wonder if there was a bug in the programme. After all, me telling you that your chances of winning the £100,000 bonus is less than 360,000 to 1 isn't going to mean much to someone who's just won that very same £100,000, is it?"

"Eh? Er, no, it ain't," said Captain Lottery.

"And that old 14 million-to-one stuff is going to mean even less to the person who's won 28 million quid on a rollover week, eh?"

"Too feckin' right!" replied Captain Lottery.

"Besides," I said, "If you got a large enough syndicate together you could win every time. A syndicate of a hundred people, even if they only won the smallest prize, would each earn 10p every single week, for only a penny outlay. Get together a syndicate of a thousand people and the outlay would be even less: you'd all have to pay in Lire, but the rewards, in Sterling, could be breathtaking! You

I Can't Believe
It's Not Buddha!



years worth of lottery draws.

Captain Lottery looked confused. He was apparently running out of brain cells. His fore-arm muscles were starting to flex, causing his merchant navy style tattoos to dance about in a purple jig. The lift chose this moment to arrive, and, seconds later, I was enclosed inside a tiny steel cage with a deranged maniac from the planet Boing. There followed a ten second silence, after which all hell let loose...

"Show me your fucking computer programme!" demanded Captain Lottery, suddenly.

Oh no – I'd have to let him into my flat for that. And if he couldn't face the truth from the PC, he might accuse me of rigging things and demand satisfaction there and then: 'We can settle this with fists or knives!' he might say. 'How about fists, knives or three rounds of Baku Baku Animal?' I could only reply. Then he'd put me in hospital anyway. Now was the moment,

could buy a house in Kent!"

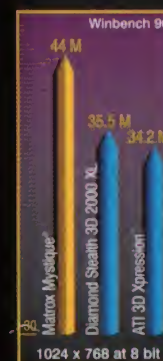
"Kent?" said Captain Lottery.

"It's a dead cert," I said.

The lift reached the 12th floor, the doors opened, and we alighted. Captain Lottery, after a few moments of deliberation, suggested (firmly) that we start a syndicate... him and me. Discretion being the better part of valour means that I now, every bloody Saturday lunchtime, am forced to drop a 50p coin through his sodding letterbox. I'm paying him 'protection money', and he doesn't even know it. Bastard! Z

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All performance tests conducted by Future Systems Inc. using a Windows 95 PC configured with Intel Pentium 166MHz CPU, 16MB of EDO RAM with 256K cache. Matrox Mystique, Diamond Stealth 3D 2000XL and ATI 3D Xpression were configured with 2 MB of memory for the PCI bus using driver releases 3.12, 3.0 and 3.07 respectively. *Winbench 95 tests conducted at 1024 x 768 resolution with 8-bit colour at 75Hz refresh using large fonts under Windows 95.



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